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MAY 2001 /CRAZY TAXI/HERDY GERDY/WAR GAMES/LE MANS 24 HOUR/DAVID MORALES/SEGA: CONFIRMED FOR PS2/DROPSHIP/HOLIDAYS FROM HELL/RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA & DEVIL MAY CRY/NEW GAME OVERLOAD IN NEWS/PREVIEWED: FUR FIGHTERS/MTV MUSIC GENERATOR/DARK CLOUD/RUGBY 2001/RED FACTION/20+ PAGES OF REVIEWS: F1 2001/OPERATION: WINBACK/MDK2: ARMAGEDDON/KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO/RING OF RED/MORE

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WHY SEGA'S QUEASY RIDER IS THE PLAYSTATION 2'S FASTEST GAME YET

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20+ PAGES OF THE BEST REVIEWS

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RING OF RED/FORMULA ONE 2001/OPERATION: WINBACK
WARRIORS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC/KURI KURI MIX/MORE

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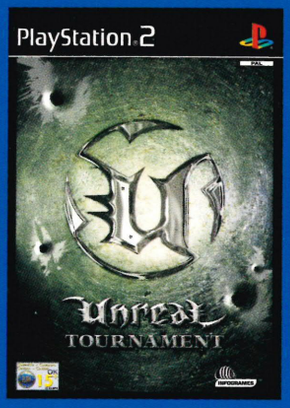

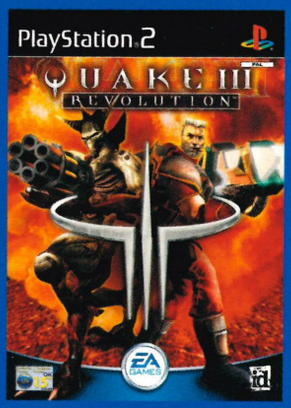

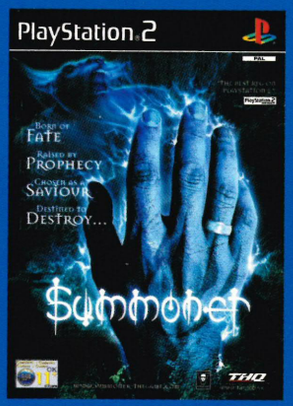

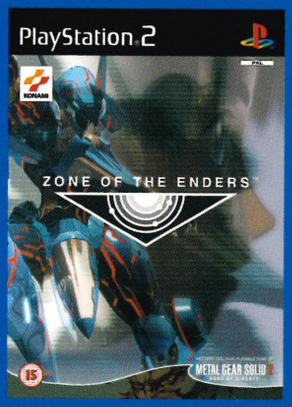

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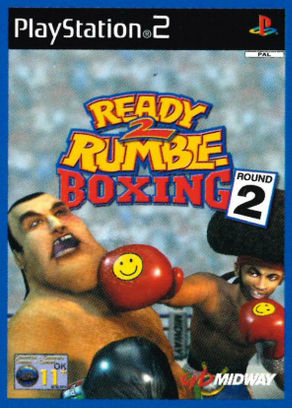

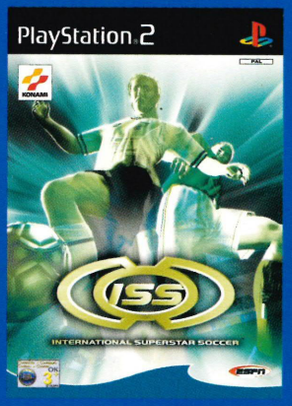

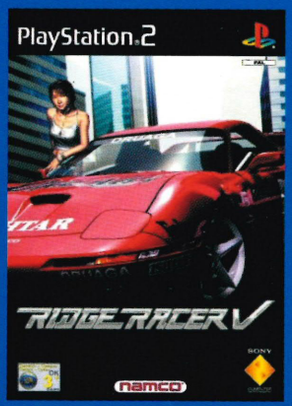

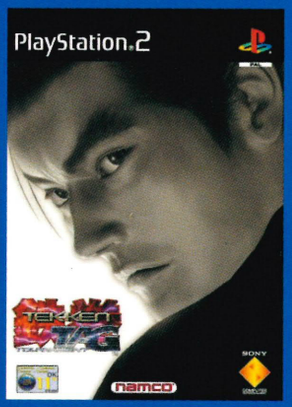

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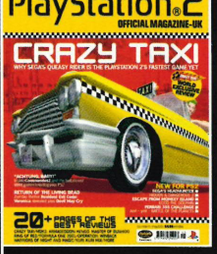

ON THE COVER
It might be safer just to walk… Sega's *Crazy* gang hit the PlayStation 2 with meters set to time and a half.

ISSUE 007/MAY 2001

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The first of Sega's arcade crackers has arrived for the PlayStation 2. Will it be taking your fare?

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Get ready to save the world again. But this time with your tongue wedged firmly in your cheek.

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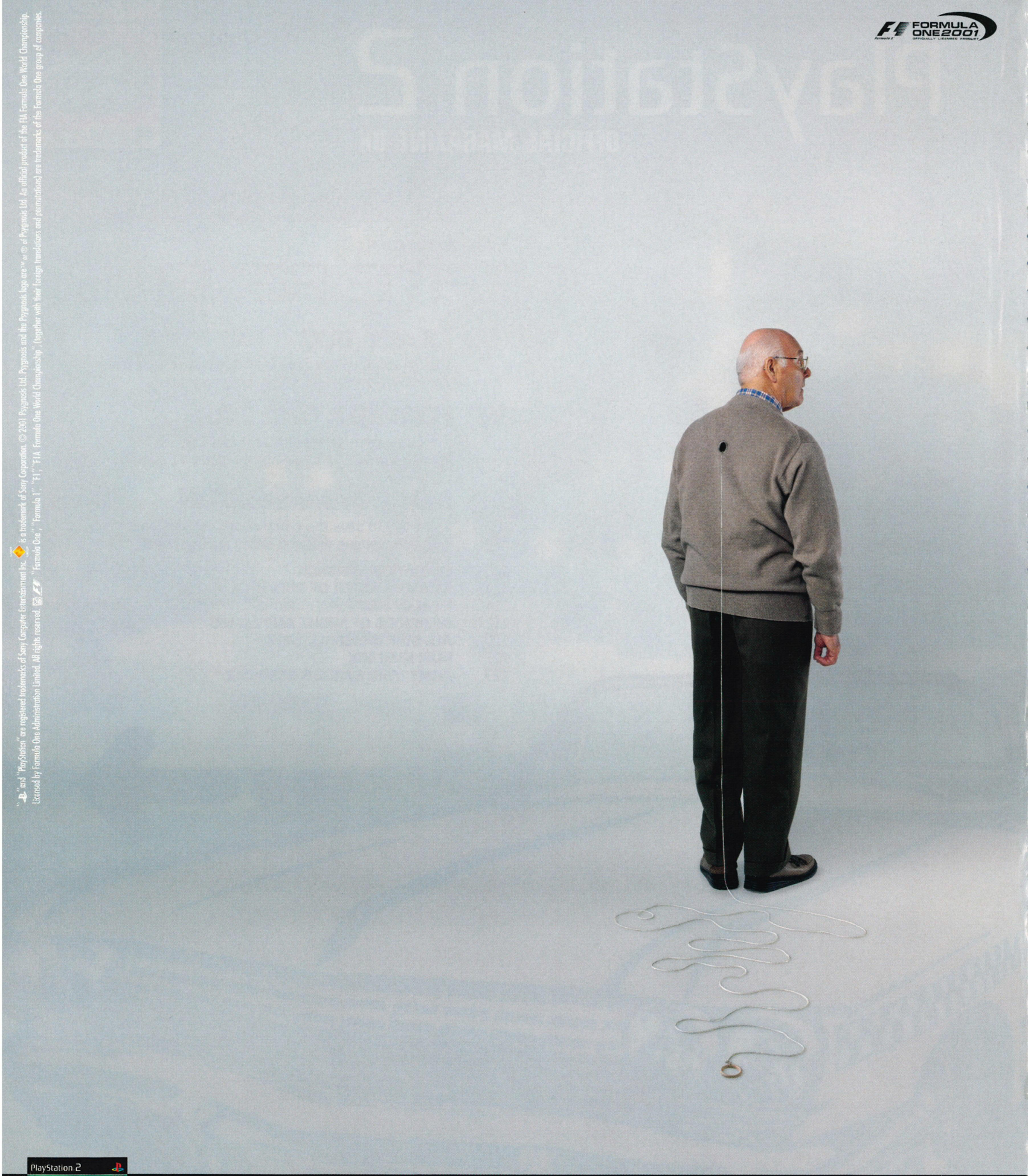

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FORMULA ONE2001

THE ONLY GAME WITH MURRAY WALKER. Rather like the great man himself, the attention to detail goes on and on. All the official 2001 season Formula 1 tracks, drivers and cars as well as Murray Walker and Martin Brundle providing expert commentary. It's also available for PlayStation and remember if it gets too much, there's always the mute button.

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PlayStation 2

THE THIRD PLACE

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ON THE DISC

ON THIS MONTH'S NEW LOOK DVD-ROM, WE'VE PLAYABLE DEMOS AND FOOTAGE OF THE PS2'S BEST...

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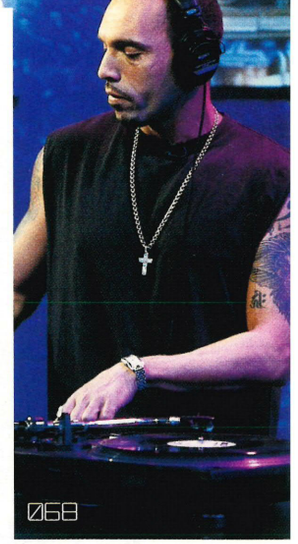
STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER
Guide space pirate Nym through the huge Valuable Goods mission in our exclusive demo level.

PLAYABLE DEMO 2/
SKY ODYSSEY
Scrape the clouds with an entire mission from this uniquely relaxing flight simulator.

PLAYABLE DEMO 3/
WARRIORS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC
Use fair means and foul to fight your way out of the Pit of the Accused...

PLUS/**VIDEO PREVIEWS OF:**
Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing, Formula One 2001, MDK2: Armageddon, Gun Griffon Blaze, ZOE, Bloody Roar 3 and more...

»**FULL DETAILS: PAGE 10**



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072 **HOLIDAYS FROM HELL**
Before you book your summer's jaunt abroad, check our guide to the world's trouble spots, as predicted by PlayStation 2.

074 **WAR GAMES**
Commandos 2 heralds an onslaught of WWII games on PS2, so why are we so obsessed with messy mass carnage?

080 **ZOMBIE NATION**
Chewing the flesh with *Resident Evil Code: Veronica*, plus an exclusive first play of Capcom's latest, *Devil May Cry.*

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OPS2 takes a spin in a Dodge Viper to see how the endurance-testing Le Mans 24 Hours race is being turned into a game.

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The ultimate accessory for bedroom beatmasters.

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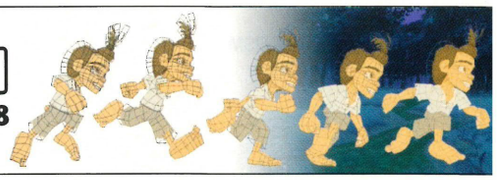
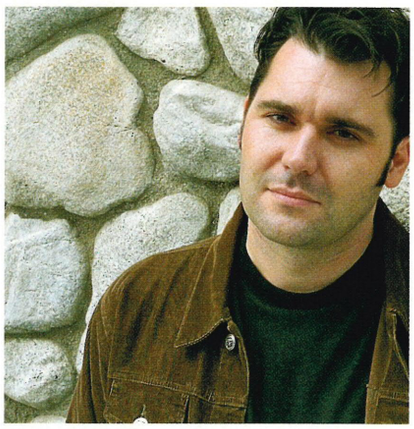
HERDY GERDY: YOKEL HERO

HAVE FUN DOWN ON THE FARM WITH CORE'S FUTURE CLASSIC – FULL DETAILS **PAGE 88**



EDITOR'S LETTER



But seriously, folks...

As our canary yellow cover proudly wails like a banshee, things are a bit more bright and breezy round these parts this month. Why? Because of that cover game – the mighty *Crazy Taxi*. Not only is this issue laden with the world exclusive review, but Acclaim's game signifies a few things. See, things are changing on PS2.

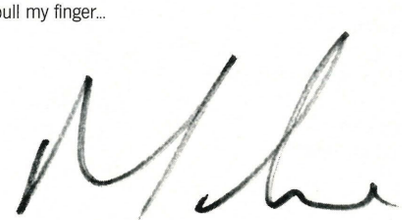
The PlayStation 2 is – depending on which side up you put the thing – a tall black monolith. It stands proud and erect next to your telly and it looks right suave like. It has sophisticated games and sophisticated titles to match – music generators, racing simulators, otaku-pleasing mech games, harrowing sci-fi adventures. These are serious games for serious gamers who might not be the black polo-neck-wearing pseuds that we were once accused of being in a review of our magazine (Editor replies by holding up handbag, Vic and Bob style), but who do indeed give their games the degree of respect they so rightly deserve.

And like us, they also like neon-splattered, dumb-assed, retina-scorching fun as much as they dig realistic rally sims. Yes, we all like trowelling the torque bars (or something) on one of *Gran Turismo*'s Dodge Vipers, but we also like broadsliding a knackered Cadillac through a shop window and stuffing the contents down our voluminous trousers. While the PSone has had the years under its belt to provide its audience with the breadth of games to allow this kind of schizophrenic game-buying, the PS2 has until recently had possibly more than its fair share of cyberpunk simulations overloaded with real-world statistics.

No more. Yes, serious gamers will still have their sophisticated games and sophisticated themes (and thank the Lord for that), but we'll increasingly have the choice to temper these temperate times with the PS2 equivalent of a fart gag. See *Crazy Taxi*, *CART Fury*, *MDK2 Armageddon*, *Giants: Citizen Kabuto* (take a look at the trailer on our DVD)... These games might not affect your waking and sleeping hours a la *Resident Evil*, *Gran Turismo 3* and the like, but they will have you laughing like a boozed-up drain at your console, which *everyone* needs to do. PS2 will soon have the choice that PSone gamers have had at their fingertips for years and if *Crazy Taxi* is the first true example of that, then bring it on.

Serious and funny. Light and shade. Murder and mirth. Sim and simple. Looks like this PlayStation 2 has got some real depth after all.

Now, pull my finger...



MIKE GOLDSMITH
Senior Editor

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The other lives of the people who make up *OPS2*...

MARK CORKE

Snapper Mark has travelled the four corners of the Earth in search of the perfect photo. Sailing the ocean waves seeking high adventure on behalf of *Sailing Today* (s'true!) is how Mark usually earns his pennies. Despite braving the frozen wastes of the Arctic and the frosty peeks of the Alps, it was in London where he nearly came a cropper. "I was taking pictures of ballet dancers when I tried to get a little too ambitious and stepped back into the orchestra pit", says Mark, "I felt an absolute tit." God only knows what Mark got up to on this issue's *MTV Music Generator* shoot in NYC so we'll keep schtum...

Game Of The Moment: "I have just about mastered *Pac-Man*. The graphics are really cool and it makes a nice chomping sound as the little man goes round the maze."

I'm holding my breath for: "The warm weather to return so I can get back out on my boat." Us too, Mr Corke, us too.

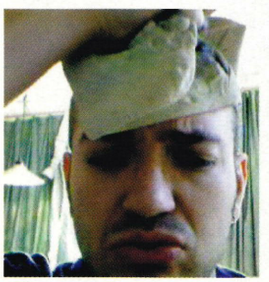
MARK WALBANK

Mark was an English teacher for a year and three months before seeing the videogame light and now spends his time more valuably on prestigious publication *Edge* as its staff scribe. Besides being the office's resident retro game expert by playing hundreds of old Amiga games (for research purposes) and befriending the girlz from *Blitz* – "Aleks says I'm a bit weird" – Mark now spends most of his day gently rocking himself in his chair and staring into space, a thin thread of drool dangling from his lower lip and incoherently mumbling about the horrors of teaching. Imagine if he'd stayed there longer.

Game Of The Moment: "As a member of the *Edge* team, I don't like games." says Mark, displaying a suave self-deprecation of *Edge*'s heinous reputation. Us? We love 'em!

I'm holding my breath for: A PS2 update of *The Man From Atlantis*. "I wish I had skin between my fingers like him," says Mark. "I once made my own with sausage skins and..."

PAUL ROSE

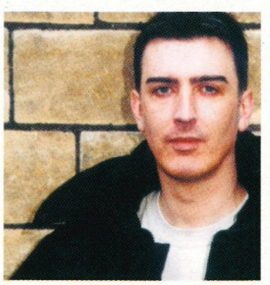


This month's top notch freelancer Paul has a most impressive CV, including running Channel 4's cult Teletext gaming site Digitizer and starting up his own lunatic website Bubblegun.com (go see!). This month, the lovely Mr Biffo (for it is he) has been enjoying the goblins of *Dark Cloud* and *Warriors Of Might And Magic* – a far cry from yet another previous life for our gaming savage. Yes, it was our Paul who used to program the scoreboards at Wembley Stadium before it was ripped apart. True, it was many years ago but you can see how his design skills were used at Teletext...

Game Of The Moment: "*Knockout Kings 2001*. What would you rather have – a man dodging fireballs, or seeing combatants get pounded into an unconscious, bloody pulp?"

I'm holding my breath for: "*Herdy Gerdy*. For the fact it embraces lush design instead of relying on millions of soulless polygons and special effects..."

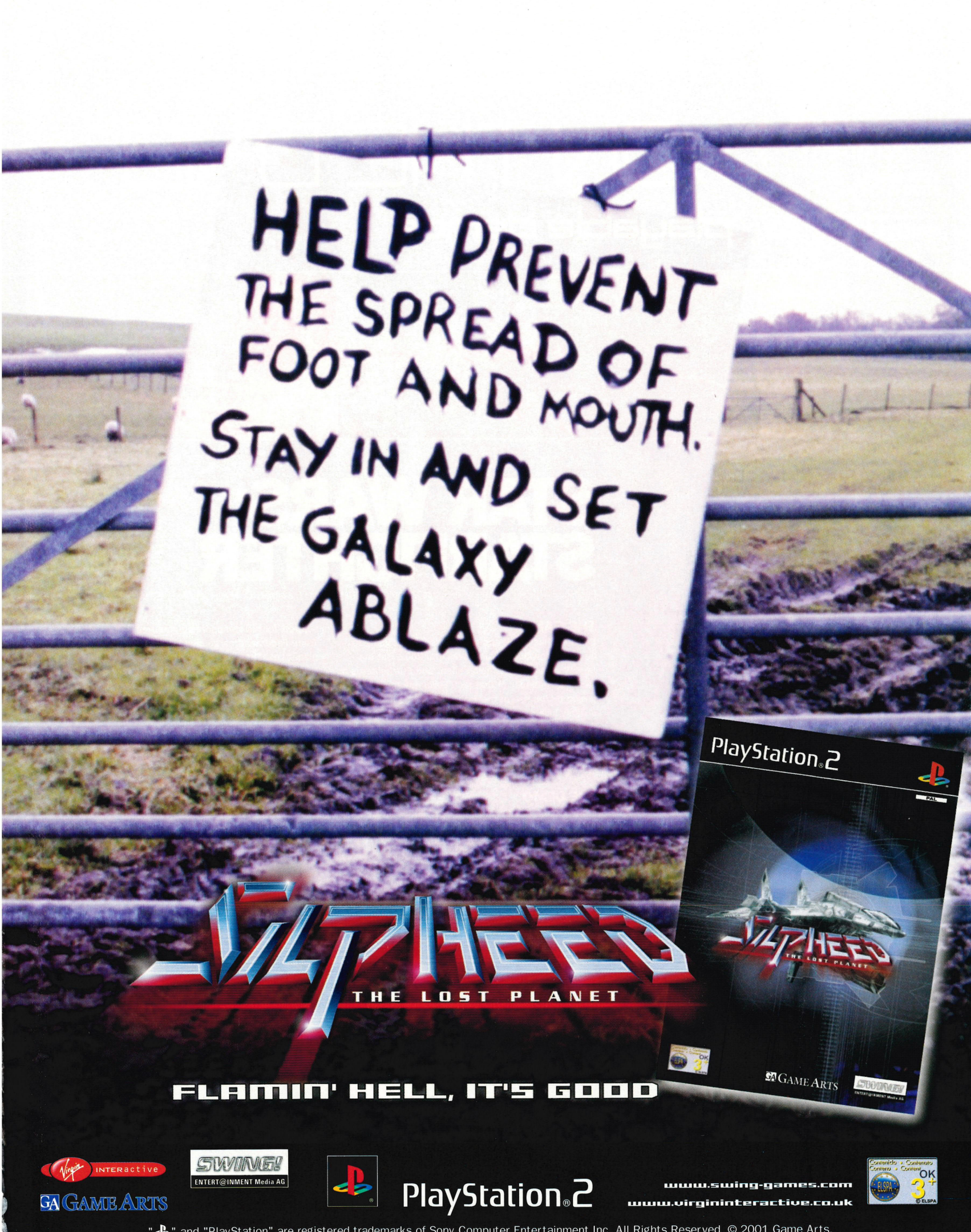
GRAHAM DALZELL



Deputy Art Editor Graham has been in this game a long time despite his boyish good looks, originally cutting his teeth on the lovely *Extreme PlayStation* – a publication he now looks back most fondly on. Seeking out new challenges, our Graham eventually sought refuge here at *OPM2* but keeps his writing skills in hand by penning music reviews for *What's On South West*. His latest task? Having to conduct an interview with Stereophonics' Kelley Jones – the stout rocker who hates journos and probably wasn't too keen on talking to Graham given his savaging of their album in the previous issue...

Game Of The Moment: "*Crazy Taxi*. After designing dozens of *Crazy Taxi* stickers for issue #06, I felt a bond with the game that I don't think anyone could break."

I'm holding my breath for: "The new Stereophonics single! Actually, it's *Gran Turismo 3* I really can't wait to get my hands on. That, and an *ISS* guide book..."



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»ON THE DVD

playable demos

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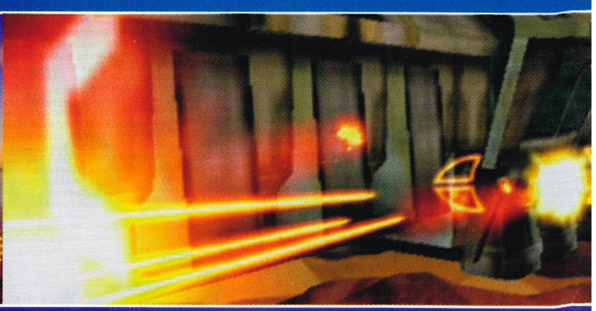


You lucky, lucky people. Why? How do you fancy flying Nym's ass kicking Havoc bomber in a mission plucked from the awesome *Star Wars: Starfighter*? Thought so. Then you're free to customise a plane or three and take them for a gut churning spin in our positively tasty *Sky Odyssey* demo. If that's not enough, put your goggles down, pick up your sword and spell book and go exploring in the slimy netherworld of *Warriors Of Might And Magic*. And once you're exhausted, you can hang your leather jerkin up and wallow in our bubbling jacuzzi of video previews and choice extras. Stand out moments this month have to be special previews of Martian first-person shooter, *Red Faction*, and the three way warring oddity that is *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*. Enjoy it. See you next month.

Catherine Channon
Senior Disc Editor

P.S. To use this disc load it up on your PS2. Then scroll between games and previews with the ↓ and ↑ keys. To choose within a section use ← and →. Press ⊗ to start your choice up. Please note, you may have to reset the PS2 after some demos.

I PLAYABLE DEMO ONE

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER

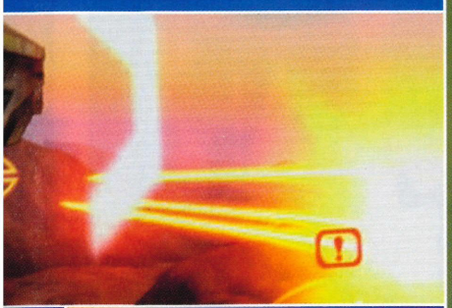
Publisher: Activision/Game type: Space shoot-'em-up/Demo type: Playable/Out: Now/Players: 1 (1-2 in full game)

THE GAME

Episode I **has come and gone.** ***Episode II*** **is going to be in post-production until well into 2002. But the** ***Star Wars*** **universe is never silent and** ***Starfighter*** **is a stunning reminder of that fact. Following three pilots forced by the rise of the Trade Federation into an unlikely alliance, the game lets you pilot some of the finest craft ever to tear through a galaxy far far away. With missions ranging from out and out blast-fests to strategic escort duties, all wrapped up in a superb story,** ***Starfighter*** **is never less than gripping.**

THE DEMO

In our exclusive playable demo you get to tackle the excellent 'Valuable Goods' mission from the full game. You play space pirate, Nym, at the controls of his harder than nails Havoc bomber as he provides air support for his compadres plundering a downed Trade Federation cargo ship over the surface of the planet Lok. There are huge troops ships and scores of tanks and fighters to tackle so you need to make use of your wingmen if you're going to protect the men on the ground (see Controls). This is fantastic mission giving you a great taste of ***Starfighter's*** **gameplay variety. After selecting the demo from the menu press START. When you're ready press ⊗ and the mission will begin with a brief description of your objectives over the ship radio. You can press SELECT at any time to pause the game and get an on-screen reminder of these. You have around five minutes in total to escort the pirate freighter to safety after which your PS2 will reset. Want to play again? Win, lose or draw you'll need to reset your PlayStation 2 once you've finished playing this** ***Starfighter*** **demo.**



» THE CONTROLS

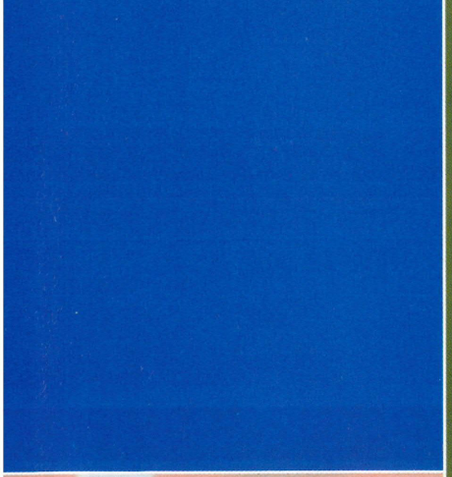
The D-pad is used for Wingmen commands. These enable you to order your fellow pilots to assist you. They are:

- ↑ Attack target
- ↓ Cover me
- ← Defend target
- → Report in
- SELECT Pause/review mission objectives

Left Analogue Ship movement

Right Analogue Roll ship (Press R3 to level out instantly)

- ⊗ Fire lasers
- △ Auto target
- ○ Fire secondary weapon
- □ Manual target select
- L1 Fire lasers
- L2 Brake
- R1 Zoom in view (For sniper attacks)
- R2 Speed boost



| PLAYABLE DEMO TWO

SKY ODYSSEY

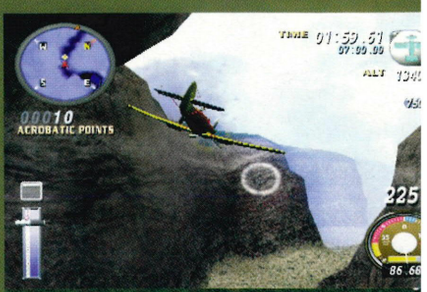
Publisher: SCEE/Game type: Fun flight sim/Demo type: Playable/Out: Now/Players: 1

THE GAME

Sky Odyssey fuses addictive gameplay to the flight sim to great effect. With a touch of the *Indiana Jones*es, a bulging hangar of unique planes and missions that test your mettle as a pilot and explorer in the harshest of conditions, the strangely compulsive *Sky Odyssey* is an excellent way to notch up air miles.

THE DEMO

Our demo gives you the controls of one of three planes from the full game, (a bi-plane, WWII fighter and an experimental pulse jet) and invites you to fly through the winding canyons of Arcadie. Once you've selected the demo, follow the screen prompts (using the D-pad and ⊗) and choose Adventure. From here you can pick your plane and even customise its paint job and emblems. Select Begin Mission when you're done. Then read up on the mission and game background, or just highlight Begin. The demo gives you four minutes of flight.

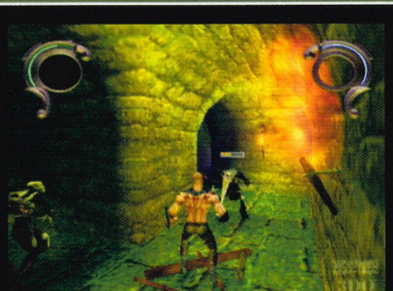


» THE CONTROLS

- START Pause
- SELECT Toggle between in game viewpoints

Left Analogue Plane movement

- □ Throttle up
- ⊗ Throttle down
- △ Landing gear up/down
- L1 Rudder left
- R1 Rudder right
- L2 Toggle on screen-map orientation
- R2 Toggle on screen display



| PLAYABLE DEMO THREE

WARRIORS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

Publisher: 3DO/Game type: 3D action/adventure/Demo type: Playable/Out: Now/Players: 1

THE GAME

In this action adventure with RPG ambitions you play Alleron a former Captain of the Guard, wrongly accused of the crime of Necromancy, and flung into the labyrinthine Pit of the Accused wearing a living mask that will mark you as criminal forever. Using a combination of magic, weaponry and puzzle solving skills, you guide Alleron through hostile environments uncovering the mystery behind his fall from grace seeking retribution for those who orchestrated it.

THE DEMO

Select the *Warriors Of Might And Magic* demo from the disc menu and you'll be plonked, quite literally into the Pit of the Accused featured at the opening of Alleron's punishment and the full game. The game makes the most of the Dual Shock 2's many buttons and sticks (see Controls) and the demo's tutorial will guide you as you fight your way into the Labyrinth. You have six minutes before the demo resets but you can play as many times as you like and there's a lot to discover. And pummel with a bone club.

» THE CONTROLS

D-pad (Hold and use with right analogue for quick access to Inventory contents)

- ← Item
- → Spell
- ↑ Weapon
- ↓ Use item
- SELECT Inventory

Left Analogue Warrior movement

- ⊗ Attack One
- △ Jump
- ○ Attack two
- □ Cast spell
- R1 Action
- R2 Lock target
- L1 Block
- L2 Crouch

»ON THE DVD

MORE DEMOS

Talk to us!

»Comments and queries about this cover disc should go to me, Cat, at PS2@futurenet.co.uk. Sorry, I can't answer your questions over the phone.

»If you have further problems with your disc pop the troublesome thing in an envelope and send it to the following address. We'll test it and, if faulty, send you a new CD. We're at *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Disc Returns, Customer Services, Future Publishing, Carey Court, Bancombe Road Industrial Estate, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6TB

**Remember though, this disc will only work on a PS2*

video previews

You've read the previews now take a look at the games in action...

PREVIEW ONE

STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBAD RACING

Publisher: Activision/Game type: Kart racing/Demo type: Video preview/Out: May/Players: 1-4

THE *STAR WARS* UNIVERSE is diverse and heavily populated, and much like our own tolerates all kinds of life. *Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing* is firmly on the flipside of the gaming coin from its thematic cousin, *Starfighter*. Populated with superdeformed caricatures of *Episode I* faves like Darth Maul and Queen Amidala, *SBR* brings kart racing to the franchise with power-ups, prangs and the opportunity to drive Jar Jar headlong into a canyon wall. Repeatedly. We'll be reviewing *Super Bombad Racing* next month, but for now take a look at the wacky side of the Force with our video preview.

*Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing *was previewed in issue #06*

PREVIEW TWO

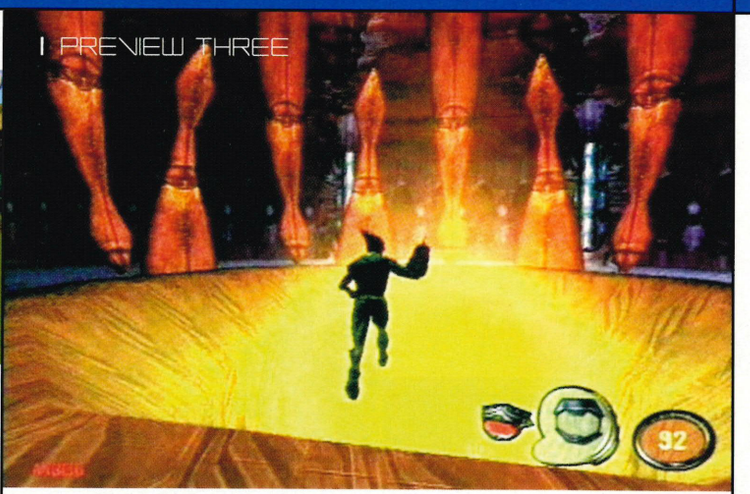
FORMULA ONE 2001

Publisher: SCEE/Game type: F1 sim/Demo type: Video preview/Out: May/Players: 1-16

WHEN ATTEMPTING TO capture the definitive Formula One racing experience, having the official F1 licence doesn't hurt. But polygon perfect cars and drivers will only get you so far. Good thing then that SCEE's Studio Liverpool has done such a fine job on recreating the thrills of bombing around the world's most challenging tracks on PS2. Whether a quick race is your thing, or an intensive championship season, *F1 2001* has plenty for hardcore and casual racers alike.

*Formula One 2001 *is reviewed this issue on page 102*

PREVIEW THREE



MDK 2 ARMAGEDDON

Publisher: Interplay/Game type: Third-person shoot-'em-up/adventure/Demo type: Video preview/Out: Now/Players: 1

AT LAST, PS2 GETS a game featuring atomic toasters, a six-legged, gun-toting cyborg dog, a mad professor with his reluctant hero janitor in an experimental battle suit and a baddie called Zizzy Balooba. The original *MDK* injected the shoot-'em-up with razor sharp wit and an early outing for the now ubiquitous sniper mode as Dr Hawkins, Kurt and Max the dog fought hordes of aliens hell bent on Earth invasion. Well, they're back for more and it's up to our three intergalactic heroes to stop them for good.

*MDK2 Armageddon *is reviewed this issue on page 108*

PREVIEW FOUR

GUN GRIFFON BLAZE

Publisher: Swing/Game type: Mech Combat/Demo type: Video preview/Out: Now/Players: 1

GUN GRIFFON BLAZE takes the not so humble battling robot game down a different route from *ZOE*'s airborne anime stylings and *Ring Of Red*'s retro strategy by giving PS2 the first-person mech shoot-'em-up. Strap into a chunky battle suit, arm it with all manner of death inducing hardware then enter the combat zone with all guns blazing. Our preview trailer gives you a mech's eye view of the ensuinhg mayhem and adds a squealing poodle metal guitar track to the sound of things going kaboom. Superb. Those still mourning the demise of *Transformers* – there is hope.

*Gun Griffon Blaze *was reviewed in issue #03*

extra

Time for something a little bit special...

| PREVIEW FIVE

ZOE

Publisher: Konami/Game type: Mech combat/Demo type: Video preview/Out: Now/Players: 1-2

IF YOU WERE UNLUCKY enough to miss our gorgeously playable *Zone Of the Enders* demo last month, fret not. First of all, pick up the phone and order a back issue. Then while you wait in earshot of the letter box pop on this *ZOE* video and drool at your TV, pausing only to select it again and again. *ZOE* is a fantastically playable game pitching you and a heavily armoured robotic suit against an invading force of similarly tooled-up mech units featuring a faultlessly balanced control system and sumptuous graphics.

*ZOE (Zone Of The Enders) *was reviewed last issue*

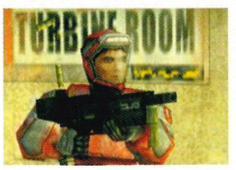
| PREVIEW SIX

BLOODY ROAR 3

Publisher: Virgin Interactive/Game type: Beat-'em-up/Demo type: Video preview/Out: June/Players: 1-2

THE BLOODY ROAR franchise takes the familiar theme of moody males and top heavy femme fatales in spectacular scraps and gives it a hefty twist with each fighter able to get in touch with their animal nature and transform into all kinds of slavering beasts complete with devastating special combos. Think of it as a fusion of *Street Fighter* pyrotechnics, feisty *Dead Or Alive 2* playability and an episode of *Animal Magic* gone horribly wrong. Our video preview gives you an idea of the kind of flying fists/paws/proboscii that this savage beat-'em-up will offer.

| SPECIAL PREVIEW



RED FACTION

Publisher: Interplay

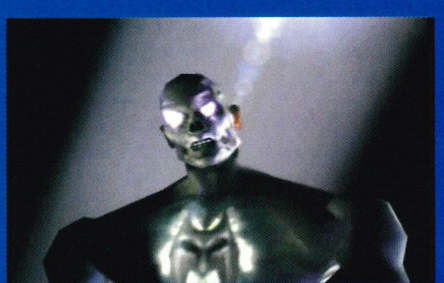
SCARCELY A YEAR into its life and PS2 has been admirably serviced by the first-person shooter community already. With the likes of *TimeSplitters, Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III* already out there it would take something pretty damn special to up the frag ante. Enter *Red Faction*. A modest tale of mine worker folk revolting on Mars, *RF* features an unprecedented level of environment interaction with players able to blow escape holes in walls, pilot multiple vehicles and generally mess with the game world and its unfortunate citizens. *Red Faction* is previewed on page 28, but you'd be crazy not to check out this jaw dropping video.

| SPECIAL PREVIEW

GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

Publisher: Interplay

ALREADY A HIT on the PC *Giants* pits three bizarre races against each other in a fight for control of a lush, life sustaining world. The Meccaryans represent the forces of technology whilst the Sea Reapers are a sisterhood of pasty skinned naturalists with supernatural powers. And then there's Kabuto. There's only one of him, but since he's a ground shaking, hulking great giant he's got as much chance as the others of outright victory. Who wins is entirely up to you, but whether you favour shooting, slashing or merely swallowing your enemies it's how you get there that's going to be fun.



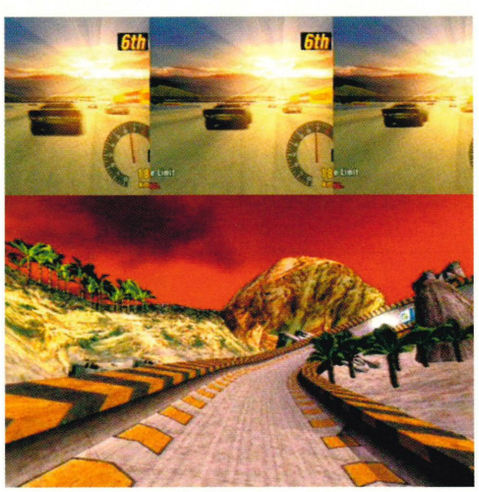
| TEASER

SHADOWMAN: 2ECOND COMING

Publisher: Acclaim

MIKE LEROI, TORTURED soul and undead Shadowman wanders the spiritual no-man's-land between the worlds of the living and the dead, keeping the two apart. He managed to stop Jack the Ripper from orchestrating a serial killer invasion of our world in his PSone debut, but evil is on the march once more and it's up to Leroi to stop it dead again. Details of this sequel are few at present, but from the look of this teaser, Leroi is ready for anything. Find out more on page 49.

| VISUAL POEM



EMOTION 3: ADRENALINE

Courtesy of SCEE

THE LATEST OF SCEE's promo films vaunting the PS2's processing power concentrates on the more energetic end of the gaming spectrum. Bringing together clips from proven heart quickeners like the superb *SSX* and *Ridge Racer V* with tantalising glimpses of upcoming titles including *Dropship* and *WipEout: Fusion*, *Adrenaline* is the perfect accompaniment to a smug look when your mates pop 'round to see your PS2.

| SPECIAL PREVIEW

SSX

Publisher: EA Sports

WHAT? YOU DON'T own this game already? Okay. Sit down and watch this. Now! *SSX* is the kind of title that transcends all the waffle about genres and target audiences and inhabits that hallowed domain populated by 'bloody great games'. This is snowboarding with insane courses, unbelievable tricks and the kind of speed that screams next-gen with every frame. Take a look at this specially prepared audiovisual teaser and get to the shops NOW!

postal

Your replies, requests, responses and rants...

Winner of the StarLetter each issue gets an exclusive *Official PS2 Magazine* T-shirt. Sadly, anyone else printed gets nowt – except, of course, the rare honour that is seeing their name in print in this fine tome. Although we are still working on mugs. Send those lovely letters to: The Editor, Postal, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email PS2@futurenet.co.uk. Get writing now!

CUP OF ROSY ANYONE?

The future of mass market online games may not be the rosy picture your and other magazines like to paint. Unlike other rather more well healed individuals, the thought of buying a game at £40 then paying another unknown expense just to complete it is not that entertaining.

I, for one, being a big RPG fan am glad to hear that *Final Fantasy X* will not be an online game. If it was, I probably would not get it until I could pay a flat rate fee for my connection and stay on as long as I wanted without the ever present niggling feeling that every second you take to explore something interesting, your phone bill is going straight through the roof.

That's just one game! Just say you have a couple of driving, first-person shooters and do a bit of web surfing as well? This online gaming bonanza is not going to happen over night and at the speed BT get things moving we're not likely to see realistically priced online gaming in the next three years.

As a sub-plot I also own a Dreamcast, which is actually starting to produce some good online games, and a PC. Am I to pay separate line charges for all three? Not on your nelly. The revolution will not be televised! At least not yet anyway.
Tom Hill, Edinburgh

I don't think we've ever painted a "rosy picture" of online gaming. True, we're guilty of being excited about the prospect, but as you so correctly point out, there's an awful lot of issues to sort out before it rolls out. SCEE are currently negotiating with a whole host of service providers and that's the most important issue to sort out. However, the kind of games you're describing are purely on-line ones – something that's not going to happen for a good few years until we've widespread broadband access. Online driving games? Hold them horses! Oh, and Final Fantasy X *was only ever going to offer online tips and the like – nothing essential. See our exclusive interview with LucasArts' President, Simon Jeffery (page 36) for more on this, but until then, expect downloadable content to be in the form of real world statistics, codes to unlock secret legends (that will end up in magazine's tips sections), characters for mobile phone nurturing etc. Nothing essential and, if our plans come to fruition, nothing you won't be able to download from our demo DVD.*

The PS2 is, at its heart, a game console and no amount of Hard Disk Drives, modems, mice and keyboards will change that. You turn it on, you press 'Eject', you stick in your game disc, you stick the drawer back in and you play. *It's the easiest, quickest and most proven way of playing games, and it will remain at the core of the PS2's approach – for now. See that digital TV? Combine that with the PS2 and now you're looking at the future.*

WAXING ONLINE, WAXING OFFLINE

I have a few queries and doubts about the whole broadband/internet situation with PS2. I can see how this would be a good idea in America with the wide availability of high speed connections but over here I'm not so sure. Let's start with BT: They don't exactly help things along do they? I live in Dorset and only last month, an all-day unmetered connection was available for £15, which isn't bad, but for the same price Americans can get ADSL. My main worry is *Final Fantasy XI*. I don't know when this is planned, but it better not be within the next few years if Square want to sell in Europe. Are we going to miss out on this almost-definitely outstanding game? I don't want to miss out, I wouldn't have minded if they made a spin-off Internet game and called it something like *Final Fantasy Online*, but to devote one of the series to it! Surely suicide?

And with the USB modems that are on their way. What's going to be their main purpose and will we be able to use the number and passwords we get for our 'BT Surf Time' dial-ups? Reassure us that Sony aren't going out on a limb and planning their death – in the games market anyway!
Mike Mcleod, Sherborne, Dorset

More questions – and rightly so – that no-one truly has the answers for just yet. We can only repeat that with broadband content distribution at the heart of Sony's plans for the future, the last thing the company would do is enter slapdash into the whole damn thing. Expect announcements for the PlayStation 2's online capabilities after the E3 trade show this May. OPS2*'s insider knowledge suggests things will happen sooner than most people think – and way better than they expected.*

ROLLIN', ROLLIN', ROLLIN'

As an owner of a PlayStation 2, I am eagerly awaiting such titles as *Final Fantasy X* and *Metal Gear Solid 2*, I also read many other games magazines (despite having subscribed to yours). It came to me that another magazine (*PSM2*) recently had a rolling demo of *Metal Gear Solid 2*. As you are the official magazine for PS2, how is it that certain demos make their way to 'unofficial' magazines first, despite the fact that the magazine is also from Future Publishing?
Oliver Bell, Poole

An explanation for you. Anyone can make a 'rolling demo' – it involves a magazine playing the game, capturing the footage and whacking it a DVD. When the game isn't available though, you have a word with the publisher – Konami in this case – and ask for an early showreel (eg see this month's Giants *trailer). In this case though, Hideo Kojima didn't want his trailer going on a CD (which our demo disc was at the time) due to the lesser quality and so it went to our sister magazine,* PSM2 *(which everyone should check out, by the way) as they are on DVD-video. In future, our new DVD-ROM will mean that we will always have the best game footage first as well as delivering the thing no one else can – playable demos. Yes, you can watch rolling demos anywhere, but wouldn't you rather play them? You know where to come.*

THE MUSIC SOUNDS BETTER WITH YOU

I noticed you did an article on Tim Wright, creator of *Music 2000*, there was a sentence where he says, "I wish that one major artist who, when asked how they began writing music, will reply, 'Oh, there was this package on the PlayStation...'"

I have a MiniDisc I made with *Music 2000* which was passed on to a radio studio. They liked my music so much they sent me an invite to a party and want me to go to their studio to record a track.
Kevin Egget, via email

OPS2 *congratulates you, young Egget, but wonders just what tunes these are that you are so expertly crafting? Is it a joyous sampladelic duvet redolent of The Avalanches (see page 133)? Or über-harsh tekno with a soupçon of Jeff Mills seasoning? Or a klang-klang lap-top glitchathon that makes Kid 606 sound like that harridan off the cruise ship? Send in that C-90, young man and sharpish – we need your love!*

THE CAR'S THE STAR

Having recently played your very own demo of *Gran Turismo 3* I was totally amazed by what I was seeing. The three cars available looked fantastic and the lush scenery was out of this world.

Anyway to my point. I think that the developers of this game are very intelligent, bringing out this demo three months before the game is to be released. The original release of this game was due for a March release but this has slipped, so instead a demo of the game is available (if this was the final copy of the game it would still be the number one seller across the world) so therefore there is more anticipation for the final release than ever before. Imagine what the game will be like in June. God forbid, it will be better than watching the TV!
Leigh Hunt, via email

The latest guestimate from our lovely friends at SCEE is that GT3 *will roar into view this July with a new playable demo for you gorgeous* OPS2 *readers (hopefully including a track from the rally mode). Delays have purely been down to Polyphony's quest for auto-perfection and, as last issue's interview shows, Mr Kaz is indeed a dedicated man. You see that rainy footage on last month's disc? That man's a genius.*

OPEN ALL HOURS

Here are a few queries I'd like answered.
i) What does "hours of gameplay" actually mean, because in many games it's way to long or way too short. Let's take *ZOE* as an example. You said it takes just over eight hours to complete on easy mode. However the first time I played it I completed it in five hours and a bit. Then there's *Final Fantasy VII* (a long time ago I know, but it's still a tremendous game). They said 120 hours of gameplay. Maybe if you include sleeping – you can easily complete it in almost half that time.
ii) Will the Hard Disk Drive being released for the PS2 come with an inbuilt modem

and if so will you have to have a cable connection routed into it?
iii) What is the difference between Q&A and Postal except they're on opposite sides of your magazine?
iv) Your magazine rules.
Edward Field, Basingstoke, Hants

Here are a few answers for you, Ed:
i) It's a subjective thing, Ed. Anyone can rush through a game and then criticise it for being short – indeed Metal Gear Solid *was a 'short' game and Kojima has already said he won't be upping the time significantly for the PS2 sequel. Have you played the demo? You can wander round for hours or rush through it in three minutes flat. Does this last fact mean it's now a lesser game? Is a double album intrinsically better than a single album? Are long films better than short ones? We try to give an average estimate of how long people can play for – it just might be you're good at these things, Ed!*
ii) More on the internal specs of the HDD next issue.
iii) Q&A is for technical queries and is scribed by Fitz, Postal is for general subject rambling and is answered by me (as in Mike – hello there).
iv) You're very sweet. We think you rule too.

SQUARE DEALINGS

I have recently just completed *Final Fantasy IX*. I absolutely loved the game and I can't wait for the tenth in the series, but in a story posted on the Daily Radar Web site, I read a preview of *Final Fantasy X* and read that Square is near bankruptcy and *Final Fantasy* is dying. Is it true? I thought the *Final Fantasy* series was the best selling series ever. Also how come there will be no more *Metal Gear Solids* after *Sons Of Liberty* – are the creators mad?
Andrew Wardle, via email

Rest assured that while Square have had a financial wobble and there are a load of rumours (substantiated and otherwise) flying about, the company is far from bankrupt with a Final Fantasy *movie (see last issue for details) and three PS2-bound games currently in development. "*Final Fantasy *is dying"? The three million gamers who bought* FFIX *in Japan alone don't think so. As for no more* Metal Gears *– well, that's up to Kojima to decide one way or the other, but we understand your grief. You have no idea how cut up we were when they said they weren't doing a sequel to* Circuit Breakers *on the PSone...*

AND ANOTHER THING...

Congrats on a first class mag. Please don't let it develop into one of those mags that are incredibly childish to read. I am 34 years old and prefer an intelligent and well written read – yours is definitely it. I detest mags that seem written by six year olds for six year olds!

I have had my PS2 a little over four months now and have yet to buy a game. Yes I know there are a few average games out there, but I am selective with what I buy - *Metal Gear, Syphon Filter, Medal of Honor* and *FFVIII* – which was too bloody long by the way!

I am waiting for some blockbusting titles and these are forever slipping it seems – *Devil May Cry, Project Eden*. I am also hoping that *Onimusha* delivers. I'm also hoping that games developers utilise the Dolby Digital that is available, so that I can play games complete with surround sound. I bought my PS2 and then bought a widescreen 32 inch and then figured, sod it, and went and purchased a Yamaha surround sound system. I have no games but about 15 DVDs and the sound is awesome. For all you people out there watching films on your PS2, you just have to get one or you are seriously missing out. Maybe you can extend your DVD section? The PS2 is after all an entertainment system.

The X-box? Insert two 'll's and an 'o' and that's what I reckon. A console that runs using Windows? Bloody thx.crashes, safe mode etc etc. Not only that, it's the size of a small house.
Lee Bonnier, Harwich, Essex

A fine rant, Lee, and we can but agree except to say you're missing out of some fine games by your abstinence. Still, Metal Gear, Syphon Filter, Medal Of Honor *and* Final Fantasy *sequels are all on their way, so we hope your bass bins are ready to rumble with gaming love. And yes, it's bloody massive, isn't it?*

SIZE DOES MATTER

I recently purchased *Zone of the Enders* and like many others, the first thing I ran was the *Metal Gear 2* demo. I expected this to take a few minutes and give me only a tiny, playable, glimpse of the full game. Over an hour later I finally finished it. It was incredible. I am annoyed at Konami for giving me so much to play since now the full game will never have the same impact.
Jonny Boggild, via email

"Hello, is that Mr Kojima? Hi, OPS2 *here. We've got a fella here who's jarred off at you for giving him a huge demo of the PS2's most eagerly-anticipated game for nowt. What's that you say? And the bike he rode in on? Um, we'll pass it on..."*

AUNTIE MAUREEN SUPERSTAR

My girlfriend has seen a Marilyn Manson CD/CD-ROM and was wondering if it can be played on the PS2? Is it only Sony Music CD-ROMs that can be used on PS2? Please explain.
Dave Moore, via email

Sorry, PS2s will NOT run music CD-ROMs, Sony Music or not. These run on Macs and PCs. PS2 only runs PS2 games and DVD video discs, although some albums and singles now have DVD segments. That said, sticking Mazza singles into a PS2 will turn your TV screen blood red and set the clock to 66.66, so you're best off out of it. We recommend a spot of Mahler and a nice cup of tea. Or At The Drive-In, baby.

To be eligible for the StarLetter prize, remember to include your full name and address. *OPS2* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and style.

POSTAL – EXTRA

Byte-sized chunks from the *OPS2* digital postbag.

First up this month is **James Wright** who, despite our warnings went out and got himself into a whole heap of trouble, "I've purchased a copy of *Dragon's Lair* for my PS2, and I'm having problems getting the game to run in colour. I have contacted the tech/support team at Digital Leisure, but their final answer is "Yeah there's a problem, but we ain't sure how to fix it". Our advice? Take it back to the shop you bought it from with your full receipt (and venom).
However, **Tim Lake**, presumably holed up in some kind of institute has considerably better taste in games, " I dribble at the thought of *Metal Gear Solid 2*" he mumbles. But then you can go too far as **Ian** from Kent clearly proves. He starts off relatively sane with "I wish to congratulate you for an excellent magazine" but quickly descends into fanatical zealously, and calls our *GT3* demo "a truly religious experience." Well it's good Ian, but we'd hardly sacrifice our first born for a copy. Then again...
A little religious intervention is clearly needed for poor **Luke Fongenie** from London, "Like many other keen gamers I have been waiting expectantly for the arrival of *Unreal Tournament*, my hopes raised by excellent reviews and imminent release dates. First it was to be released in January, then February, then March, and now April. The hype may be good for business, but it causes huge disappointment. Is this a deliberate, cynical marketing strategy or persistent miscalculation?" Who cares? Buy *Quake III*, it's so much better anyway.

back issues

Want to get your hands on the issues people are discussing in Postal? Come raid our warehouse for issues you've missed. All issues feature playable demo discs.

THREE: Exclusive report on *Grand Theft Auto 3* plus *Moto GP, F1 2001*, Bemani and more. Disc has *Dynasty Warriors 2* and *NHL 2001*.

FOUR: Exclusive UK review of *Unreal Tournament* plus *Silent Hill 2*, Mikami on *Resi 4, Tomb Raider* movie and *Moto GP* on the disc.

FIVE Exclusive look at *The Getaway*, reviews of *Oni* and *Knockout Kings 2001*, plus a playable demo of *GT3: A-spec*.

SIX: Exclusive UK review of *Star Wars: Starfighter*, a huge playable *ZOE* demo on the disc, Sega on PS2 and *Onimusha* previewed.

To order back issues of *OPS2*, write to *Official PlayStation 2* Back Issues, Future Publishing, Cary Court, Somerton, Somerset, TA11 6TB, or call 01458 271184. Back issues are priced £5.99 (UK), £6.99 (Europe) and £7.99 (Rest of the World). Supplies limited.

An early sketch of the redesigned Rico the penguin: Just one of the stars of *Fur Fighters*.

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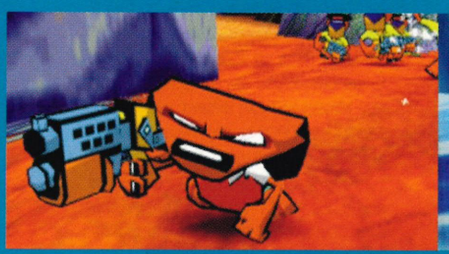
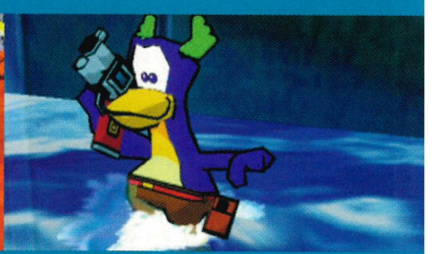
THE DIRTY HALF-DOZEN

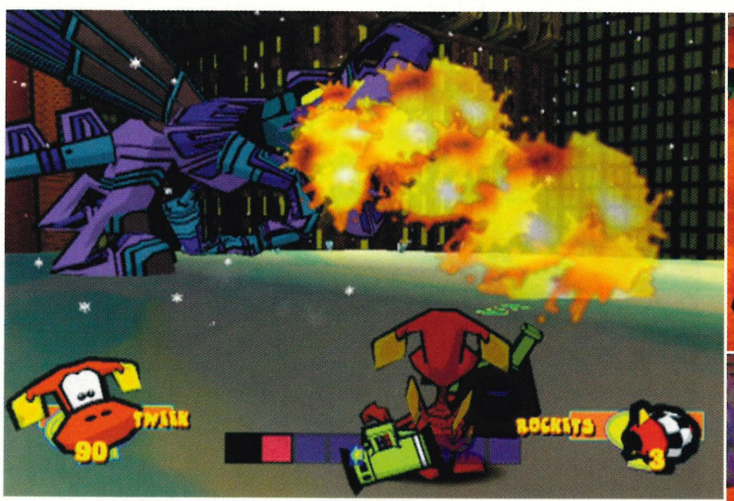
Meet the *Fur Fighters* gang – the hardest softies in 'toon town...



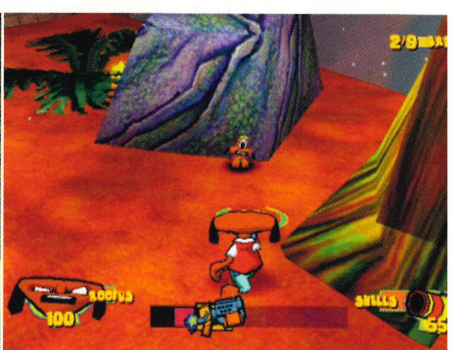
ROOFUS
Species: Dog **Birthplace:** Scotland
CV: The unelected leader of the *Fur Fighters*, Roofus is a noble Scottie dog who can dig into mounds of earth to access new areas.

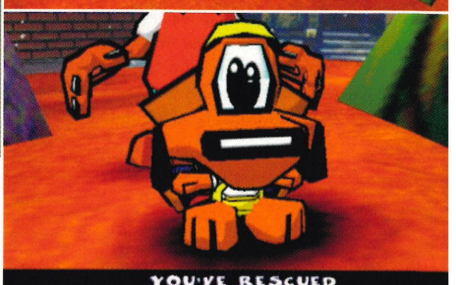


RICO
Species: Penguin **Birthplace:** Argentina
CV: Whereas the others can only paddle at the surface, Rico is the main man in his natural habitat – diving underwater to find those babies.



(Above) A boss encounter with Tweek's mad mum while Scottie find baby Angus (left).





WORDS: LEE HART

FUR FIGHTERS

Fluffy warriors, heavy artillery, kidnapped babies, evil cats, teleportation – and that's just the first ten minutes. Are you ready to enter the crazy cartoon world of the *Fur Fighters*?

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Bizarre Creations
Players: 1-4
Release: 8 June

The fashion world is the most fickle of industries. One minute, wearing fur is strictly for odious Cruella de Ville type monsters, as socially unacceptable as goosing the Queen Mother and serious enough to persuade nubile ladies such as Naomi Campbell to get their kits off for the 'I'd rather go naked than wear fur' campaign. And then the next minute fur is suddenly 'in' again. Naomi is strutting down the catwalk with the best part of a mountain leopard on her boney back and animal rights extremists are falling over themselves to chuck red paint at Liz Hurley's head. It's all very confusing.

However, one group for which wearing fur will always be in fashion is the *Fur Fighters* – a ragtag bunch of hairy critters who star in the upcoming adventure of the same name. And considering the Fighters are combat veterans tooled up with Uzis and shotguns, we'd strongly advise any animal rights activists not to target this group of fur-wearers.

Our fluffy friends are six creatures who, when they're not heroically fighting crime, like nothing better than relaxing in their village, looking after the kids. Their nemesis is the Blofeld-like criminal mastermind General Viggo. Naturally, he's a cat. Even more naturally, he has a sinister plot for world domination.

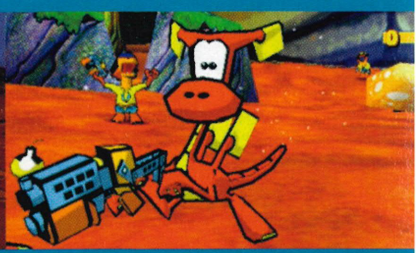
To keep the Fighters otherwise occupied while he embarks on his megalomaniacal activities, the feline villain kidnaps all their babies and hides them around six diverse game worlds. And, to make matters worse, he also genetically modifies their parents/siblings into six monstrous bosses. It's your task to rescue all the babies and defeat the boss relatives to return them to their normal cuddly selves, before encountering Viggo in a final furry face-off, scuppering his plans once and for all.

Because the babies have been brought up properly and won't just wander off with any old animal that happens along, they have to be retrieved by their own parent. This means – in the game's stand-out feature – it's necessary to play as all six

JULIETTE
Species: Cat **Birthplace:** France
CV: The fastest, most agile member of the gang, Juliette can also climb on a variety of surfaces to scale heights the others can't reach.

BUNGALOW
Species: Kangaroo **Birthplace:** Australia
CV: The oafish Aussie hasn't got much upstairs but bouncy old Bungalow has the handy ability to jump much higher than the rest of the Fighters.

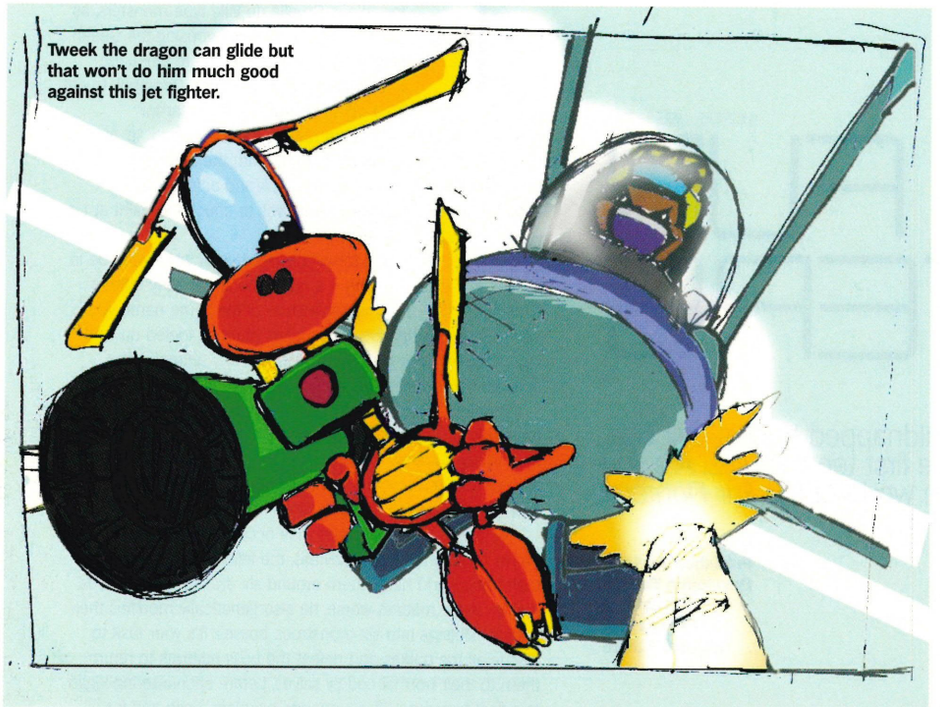
CHANG
Species: Firefox **Birthplace:** Hong Kong
CV: A trained martial artist and military strategist, Chang uses his small stature and natural cunning to sneak into the tiniest of gaps.



TWEEK
Species: Dragon **Birthplace:** Wales
CV: The baby of the bunch, Tweek is only a day old and so hasn't yet learned to breathe fire or fly, but he can glide like a good 'un.

A dino in the bath reading the paper? It's a typically bizarre sight in the Dinotopolis world.

Warp points are found where it's necessary to change into a specific character.



Tweek the dragon can glide but that won't do him much good against this jet fighter.

Fighters, each with their own skills and playing style (see The Furry Half-Dozen). The *Fur Fighters* Teleportation Device is used to switch between characters. These are placed in strategic points where it's necessary to play as a specific Fighter.

For example, should you come across a platform that's just a bit too high to reach, there'll be a warp point allowing you to change to Bungalow the kangaroo who can jump that little bit higher than the others. A stretch of water barring your way? Switch to Rico the penguin and his swimming ability will see you right. Just why is that big wall covered in paw marks? Well, that's the cue to teleport in Juliette the cat who will clamber up the wall like a pussy on heat. The remaining Fighters are Roofus the Scottie dog who can dig through mounds to reach new areas, Chang the firefox with his tiny stature enabling him to sneak into nooks and crannies and Tweek the baby dragon whose fledgling wings can be used to glide across gaps.

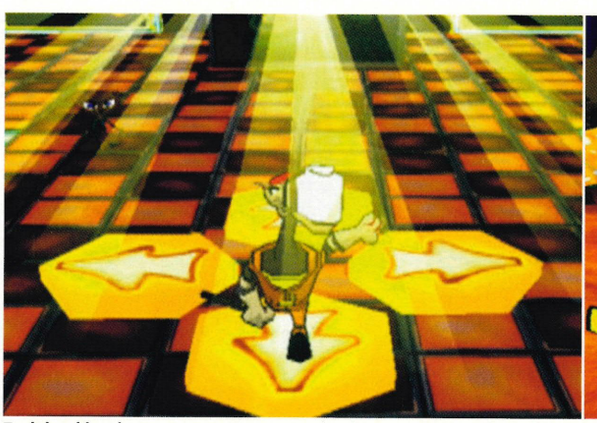
These furry heroes must put their skills to the test in environments packed to the brim with puzzles to solve, obstacles to negotiate and, most commonly, an endless supply of vicious baddies to blow away. Viggo's henchmen range from bears and dogs armed to the teeth, to snapping crocodiles and peacocks carrying oversized rocket launchers, so it's a good thing that you're well equipped with equally serious weaponry. You begin with a basic pistol but this can be upgraded to machine gun status and, along the way, shotguns, laser-blasters and grenades all become available. Oh, and there's also the lethal smart bombs which can obliterate entire enemy squadrons in one shot. Very satisfying.

The different gaming areas are all superbly realised and, perhaps more importantly, have puntastic titles. The first level, bustling metropolis New Quack City, takes the Richard Whiteley award for services to the pun. Others include Dinotopolis where everything is typically dino-sized and has you clambering around mountainous furniture, and the *Buck Rogers*-crossed-with-*2001* interstellar larks of Cape Canardo.

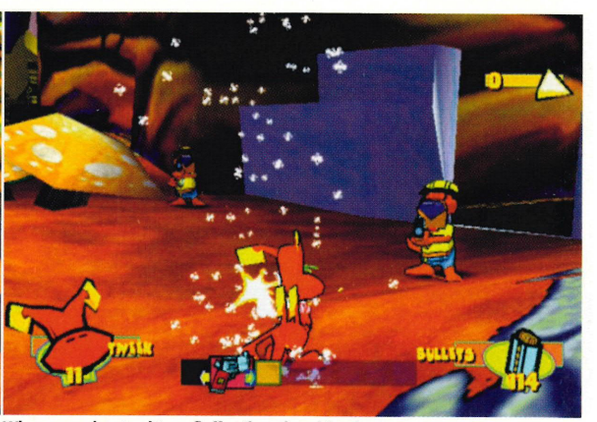
FLUFFIN' HELL

Step this way for four-player furry carnage.

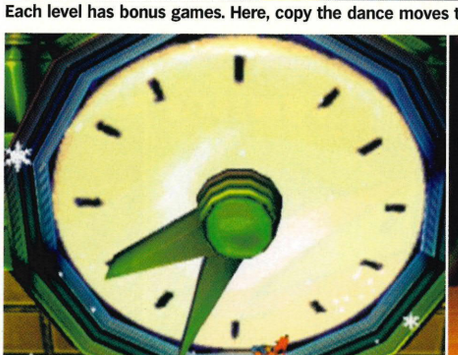
Fur Fighters' excellent multiplayer action comes in the shape of the predictably-titled Fluffmatch. Traditional deathmatch warfare but with an added supply of fluff, up to four of you can choose a character and head out into the arenas to blast your fellow Fighters to pet cemetary. With a liberal supply of weapons and energy boosts plus warp points allowing you to change characters, it's bound to be a case of survival of the furriest. Sorry.



Each level has bonus games. Here, copy the dance moves to win a prize.



When you shoot critters fluff rather than blood oozes out.



The security guard (below) won't let you board the lift so go and jump on the clock to change it to his home time.

Rico's in trouble with that puny pistol. It's vital to collect better weaponry.

But what really makes *Fur Fighters* such an unusual and promising adventure is its expert mix of gameplay elements. Whether you're strafing from side-to-side blasting the fluff out of enemy creatures, finding your way to the top of a dinsoaur's head to rescue a baby (while the dino in question sits in the bath reading a newspaper) or simply playing a bonus game of basketball to win a dime from a pelican, the variety on show is, even at this stage in development, quite staggering.

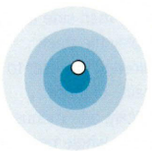
Fur Fighters was originally released on Dreamcast and PC last summer but this forthcoming PS2 version has undergone a considerable make-over. New levels have been added, the Fighters have each been given their own distinctive voices, and the already impressive visuals have been improved with the use of cel-shading on the characters. This is an effect similar to that seen in *Jet Set Radio* on DC which adds a black outline around characters, giving them a hep 2D cartoon look.

In fact, the entire experience can feel like you're involved in some kind of cool toon from the Seventies. The aesthetics, comedy violence and quirky touches all adding to *Fur Fighters*' considerable appeal. A subversive interactive cartoon with a successful combination of shoot-'em-up action, puzzles and platformery? We'd buy that for a dollar. □

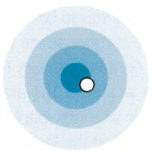
Juliette is the only lady of the bunch but her feminine ways certainly don't stop her dishing out some serious ultra-violence.

ON TARGET? FUR FIGHTERS

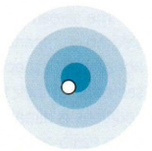
A varied and challenging action/adventure with bags of style and humour. Fur will definitely be back in fashion this summer.



CHARACTERS
Six excellent critters all with different traits and abilities.



COMEDY
Listen to that polar bear yelp as the missile closes in.



VIOLENCE
Don't fall for their soft toy appearance. They're hard. As bricks.

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WORDS: GEORGE WALTER

MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 2

Even the tone deaf shouldn't have a problem getting a chart hit out of the PS2's first music creation program.

Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Jester Interactive
Players: 1-8
Release: May

Updated from the PSone originals *Music* and *Music 2000* (known as *MTV Music Generator* in the US), the concept of *MTV Music Generator 2* is certainly one of the more creative uses for your PlayStation 2. More 'utility' than 'game' Jester Interactive's aim is to make the art of console-aided songwriting as easy as possible.

The main thing that made *MTV MG2's* predecessors so simple to understand, was the way the interface functioned. In English, how you made a track. Put in most simple terms it worked by you placing coloured building blocks of sound (riffs) on to a grid in a particular order and then pressing play. Initially it would sound a mess but it was hugely satisfying when, with practice, the sounds came together to make a tune.

Ease of use is coupled with the tools to create incredibly complicated loops (a repeated riff) and a range of incredibly tech-heavy functions that you can use to manipulate and doctor the sounds themselves. But in order to create a complex sounding track it's possible to take the easy route and use the 10,000 preset riffs (a drum beat, a guitar chord etc) spanning eight genres.

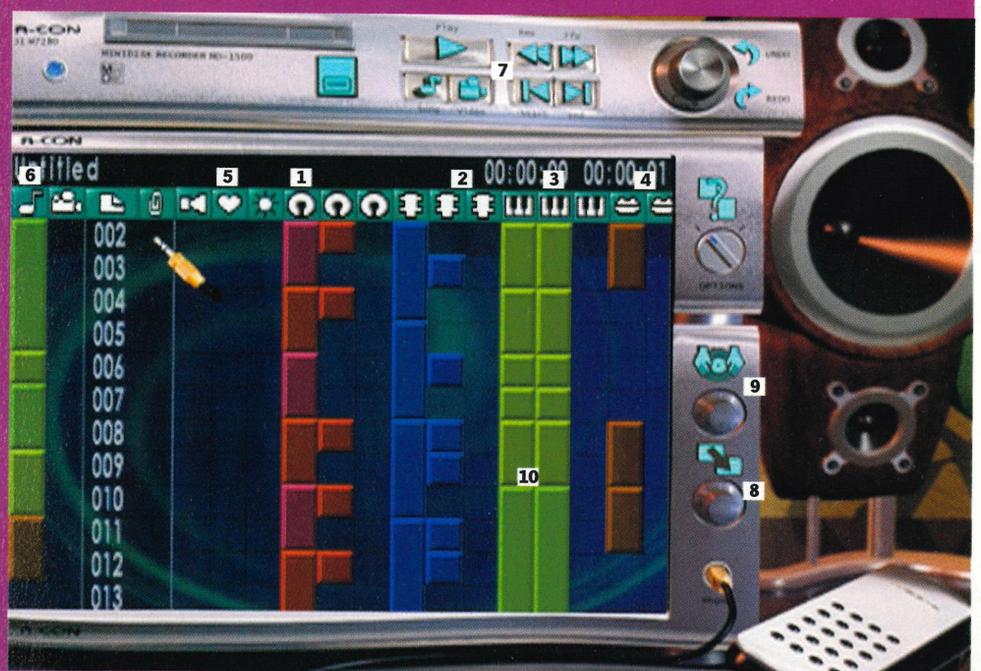
The most obvious additions to this PS2 version are of the spatial variety. The increased memory allows for four times more samples, a 24x speed CD means faster loading times and the PS2's 48 sound channels as opposed to PSone's 24 give a richer sound with better quality.

The screen now scrolls top to bottom rather than side to side which means there is more space to display the track horizontally, especially on a widescreen TV, allowing the user to see more of their track at a time. The practicality of these additions is already clear with riffs loading quickly, and menus more easily accessible, giving the feeling that the whole process has been fine-tuned to the nth degree.

The Video Editing mode has been extended but also further simplified. Now the various shapes, lighting effects and textures

RIPE FOR A MAKEOVER

This is what the new interface of *MTV Music Generator 2* will look like. But what do all those buttons do?



1 to 4 Clicking on these icons brings up the relevant riff palette for that instrument. They are 1) Drums, 2) Bass, 3) Melody and 4) Vocals. You can only insert these riffs into their particular track.

5 This is where you determine the tempo of the track, measured in beats per minute (BPM). House and Garage will be best at about 130-150 BPM whereas Hip-hop and R'n'B sound comfortable at 80-100 BPM.

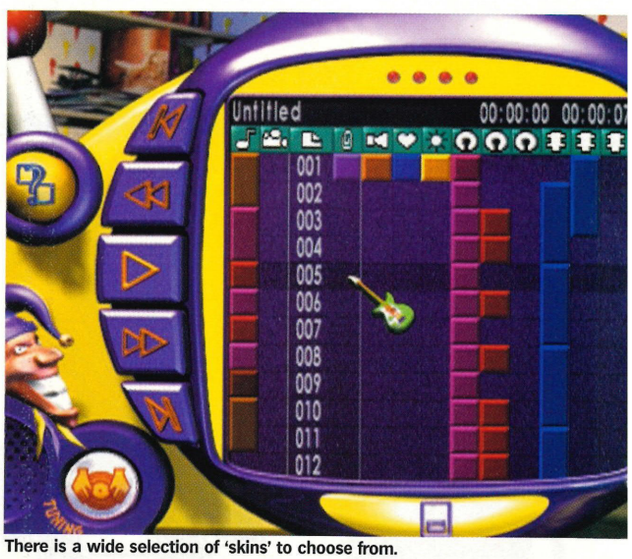
6 The palette. Each time you load a new riff in it will appear in this window. When you wish to use the riff you can click on it in the palette rather than having to load it in again.

7 Click here to play your track back. You can operate the playback as you would with a CD player using fast-forward and rewind. You can also leap to the start or the end of your track.

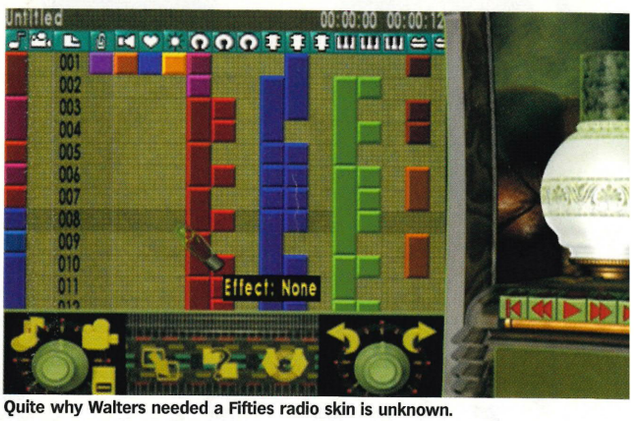
8 Click here to select the 'skin' (visual theme) of your choice. Okay it won't make the slightest bit of difference to your creative ability but it looks pretty.

9 This is Jam mode, a multiplayer option where players build a track together live. Kind of *MTV Music Generator 2 Unplugged*. But you aren't unplugged.

10 Riffs are placed in this window by pointing at the area you wish to position them. The pointer shape will change depending on what skin you have decided to use. Users of previous incarnations will notice the program now runs top to bottom with the bar number indicated down the left hand side of the screen..



There is a wide selection of 'skins' to choose from.



Quite why Walters needed a Fifties radio skin is unknown.

are selected in the same way as the song riffs are and placed alongside them on the song palette. This makes it easier to judge when to bring in a particular image in time with the song.

Jester Interactive has noted the changes in musical trends over the last year too and we have the success of Craig David, Artful Dodger and Destiny's Child to thank for the addition of R'n'B and (UK) Garage sample sets. So that's skippy drum breaks, wowomp bass lines and twinkly harpsichords then. Drum'n'Bass and Techno have disappeared leaving wannabe Grooveriders and Jeff Mills groupies to the wayside.

One area of contention is the process of sampling your own sounds into the program. In the PSone version the internal CD player was utilised but this has not been allowed on PS2. Jester's solution has been to create a USB connector to record samples via a microphone or direct from your stereo.

The uses of *MTV MG2* will be manifold: just for fun, for the budding producer who can't afford a two grand studio set up and the cheeky, sample obsessed remixer. Whatever the reason, and what ever level your musical inclination you'll be creating tracks in minutes. The democratization of music starts here. □

DJ David Morales gets excited about MTV MG2 *on page 68.*

//The uses of *MTV MG2* will be manifold: for fun, for the budding producer and for the sample-obsessed remixer//

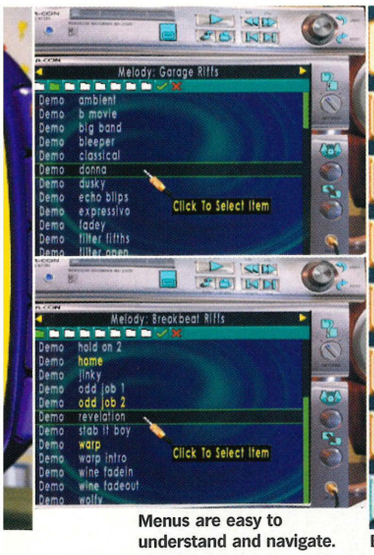
ON TARGET?
MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 2

Hear'Say better start to get worried. This could make stars out of a few other nobodies...

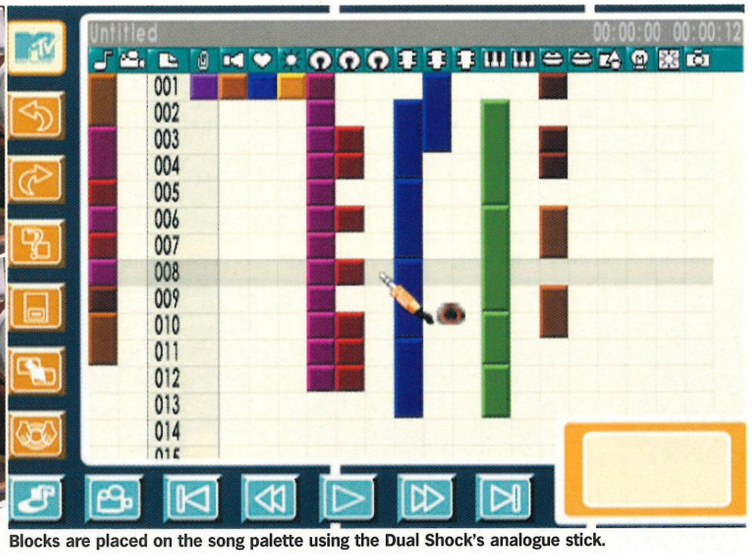
SAMPLES
Some great preloaded riffs – and a few awful ones it must be said.

EASE OF USE
Jester does it again. Very intuitive and a lovely new interface.

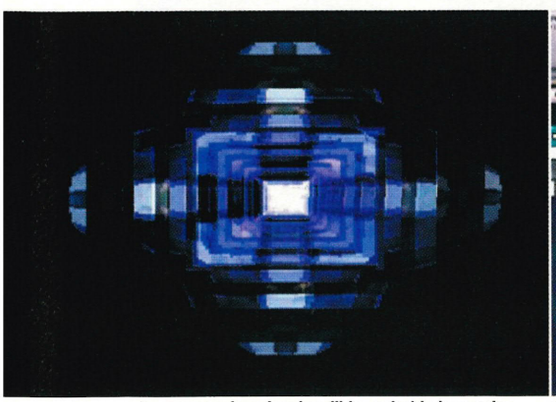
EXPERT OPTIONS
Enough complex graphs and figures for the tech head.



Menus are easy to understand and navigate.



Blocks are placed on the song palette using the Dual Shock's analogue stick.



Accompanying visuals will be suitably hypnotic.

The Note Parameters editor allows endless manipulation of the sound.

Q&A

MELODY MAKER

***OPS2* asks creator of *MTV Music Generator 2* Tim Wright about some of its new features.**

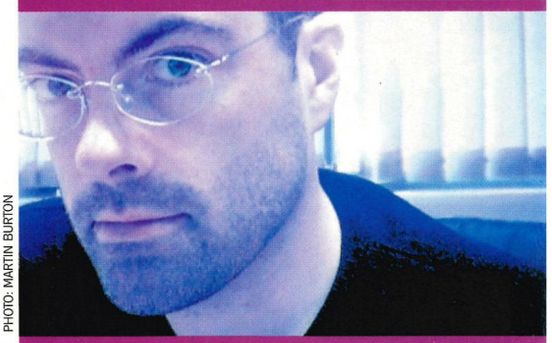


PHOTO: MARTIN BURTON

Why have you changed the musical style of some of the sample sets?
We wanted to embrace more musical styles this time out. This is a music creation package for the masses, and the masses have diverse musical tastes!

Exactly how many more different sounds are there in *MTV Music Generator 2* than *Music 2000*?
Nearly three times as many – over 10,000! We've also included many from *Music 2000*, so that existing users feel at home when they boot up the all new *MTV Music Generator 2*.

How many seconds of sample time does 2MB of memory equate to?
In theory just over one minute 34 seconds. This is a lot if you consider a single drum sound itself takes up a fraction of a second.

Do you expect to see a load of *MTV Music Generator 2* produced remixes on the Web after it has been released?
If you check out a lot of the amateur MP3 based websites, you'll find a high percentage of them have comments like, "Written using *Music 2000*." I was surprised how many! I'm sure the numbers will keep growing and growing...

Do you think that *MTV MG2* gives users the potential to create a commercial chart hit?
We've already seen chart hits written on two Commodore Amiga's before now, so I don't see why not. Even if the 'actual' recording isn't made out of the back of a PS2, the songs that are written using *MTV MG2* can be remixed and released, so the potential is absolutely there.

WORDS: PAUL ROSE

DARK CLOUD

It looks like an RPG, it says RPG on the box, but it reeks as much *Theme Park World* as of *Final Fantasy*. Inhale the fumes.

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: SCEI
Players: 1
Release: May 2001

You don't have many games which begin with a huge dance routine, featuring breathtaking, high-kicking choreography, but the latest horse to bolt from Sony's RPG stable hasn't one, but two, within the first five minutes. If you've had any sort of experience with games – particularly role-playing games – you'll know this is not the norm. Where is the ominous voice-over about how a dark shadow passed over the land? Where's the standard issue half-mad cackling sorcerer? What about the plucky young, spikey-haired hero, with an oversized sword, and an unrequited yearning for a mysterious girl, who secretly is a Runaway Princess?

Not here. *Dark Cloud* kicks off with a song and dance. And a hungry giant swallowing some fat bloke. It speaks volumes for its steadfast refusal to tow the party line, and though sharing certain traits with other games in the genre, it's the way these are realised which really raises the eyebrows. Playing something of an atypical RPG hero, *Dark Cloud* finds you attempting to put your village back together, following a genie-led assault by a hostile neighbouring nation. So far, so different. Now here's where it gets really odd. The constituent components of your village have been scattered to the four winds, in large bubbles; villagers, fences, houses all. You have to find the bubbles – or 'atlas' – free the contents, and then put everything back together. It's a bizarre mix of *Zelda 64* adventuring, and *Theme Park World* planning. See, recreating your village isn't a simple matter of plonking the pieces in place; it requires some lateral thinking. Villagers are likely to complain if they don't like where you've put their house or if the huge totem pole obscures their view of the communal baths. Upset the villagers, and your popularity rating drops, and you're going to be less likely to receive sudden hand-outs of health potions – or, more importantly, a stack of new swords.

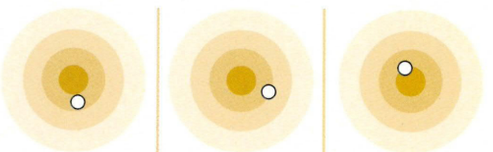
Again, in a brave move going against the grain, the weapons are prone to breaking. A busted sword can still be hammered against a skeleton's jaw, but it isn't going to do it much harm. Keeping an eye on your weapon's damage meter is therefore a necessity.

Right now, the village planning aspect is the weird-out RPG's strongest, and most original feature. The role-playing bits are, by contrast, atypical and lightweight. Though clearly inspired by Nintendo's *Zelda* franchise – the lock-on feature is a direct lift – the simplistic, one-button combat, and repetitive dungeoneering still needs work. Also, the camera system, while not the worst there's ever been, is likewise in need of a tweak or two.

But hey – it's yet to be released in the West (as the copious Japanese text in our preview version attested) so there's still surgery time. Providing the action-led sections can be brought into line with the originality of its more strategic elements, and the overall nutty nature of the plot, the outlook should be warm and bright. □

ON TARGET? DARK CLOUD

Already doing the numbers in Japan, this RPG needs a damned good tweaking before it'll suit the less adventurous western palate.



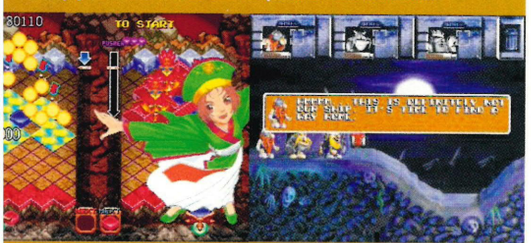
GRAPHICS
Gorgeous detail on the building interiors, Externals need work.

ACTION
Running and hitting enemies with your sword. Nowt else.

ORIGINALITY
A full-on action RPG *and* a God sim? Heaven, take me now.

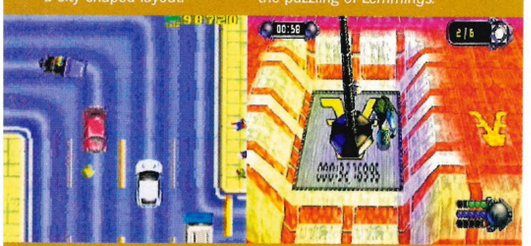
GENE SPLICING

Takes two genres, mash together, add garlic, simmer, then enjoy. Previous dishes on the specials menu included...



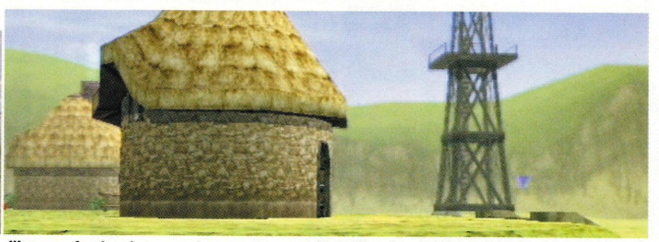
LANDMAKER
Sim City meets *Wetrix*, on the PSone. Building-shaped blocks drop from the sky, deftly arrange them into a city-shaped layout.

LOST VIKINGS
Ancient Mega Drive and PSone platformer, blending the leaping of *Super Mario World* with, believe it or not, the puzzling of *Lemmings*.



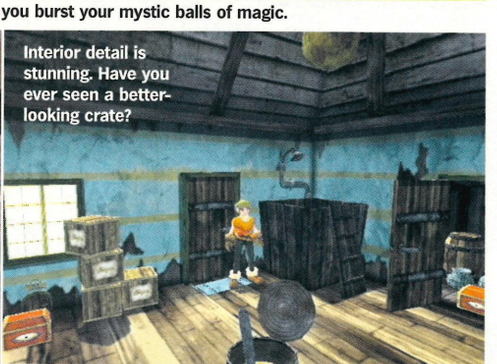
GRAND THEFT AUTO
Carmageddon meets *Pac-Man* in a joyriding, racing and crimming hybrid.

MOHO
A blend of coin-op chillout classic *Marble Madness*, and the, erm, different *Speedball*.

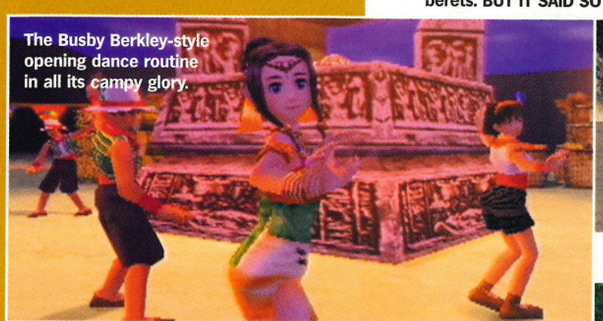


Just like in real life, picturesque villages will spew forth when you burst your mystic balls of magic.

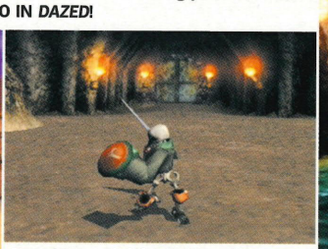
This time next year, everyone will be wearing ponchos and berets. BUT IT SAID SO IN *DAZED*!



Interior detail is stunning. Have you ever seen a better-looking crate?



The Busby Berkley-style opening dance routine in all its campy glory.



Travel through labyrinthine dungeons is hampered by the inhabitants.

On-screen level mapping ensures you don't stay lost for long. Alternatively why not ask a passing goblin? Strewth.

The Adventure Continues...

Episodes 13-16 of Season 3 available to own on DVD and video from 23.04.01 at Virgin megastores

DVD now includes special features. Plus FREE exclusive collector's phone card*

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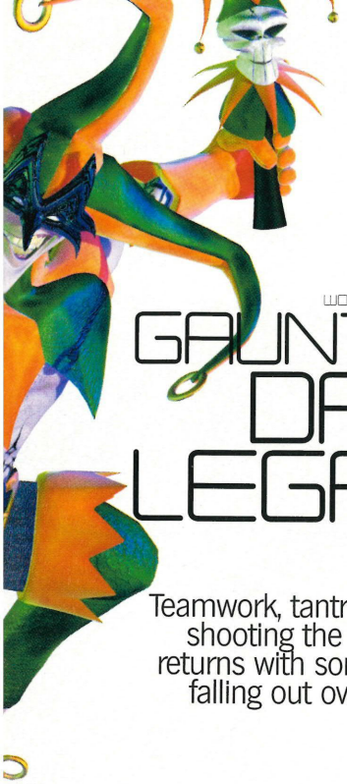


GAUNTLET DARK LEGACY

WORDS: MARK WALBANK

Teamwork, tantrums and twits shooting the food. *Gauntlet* returns with something worth falling out over on the PS2.

Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway
Players: 1-4
Out: June 2001

GREEN. ELF. IS. IT,' pronounces a voice from some deep recess inside *Gauntlet II*'s arcade cabinet. And like Moses predicting a plague of pestilence in some Cecil B DeMille movie, swarms of lurching bit-mapped creatures begin targeting the poor unfortunate player recently tagged by a team 'mate'. *Gauntlet*'s diabolical premise consummately tapped into those basic instincts which made early multiplayer gaming such a sensation: fear, greed, revenge.

But the legacy has crumbled. While home conversions of *Gauntlet* and *Gauntlet II* failed to capture the freneticism of the coin-ops, recent efforts to move the concept into the 3D arena have failed. *Gauntlet Legends* [PSone/DC] made a valiant effort at updating the format but blinkered camera views and clunky controls let the title down. Now Midway resurrect the formula again, but the question remains: can *Gauntlet*'s sublime 2D mechanic make the transition to 3D?

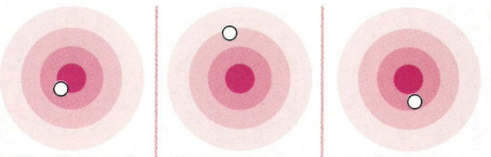
Gauntlet Dark Legacy is delightfully simple. Enter labyrinthine dungeons replete with hordes of creatures and hack a route through to the nearest exit. The addition of treasure chests, special power-ups and food give players plenty to squabble over. And while strategy will never be *Gauntlet*'s strongest card, some deliberation is required to work out which monster generators to target first. With four players the game takes on an even greater intensity, because to succeed one must constantly balance selfishness with support.

On the surface Midway's 2001 update would appear to offer a potent cocktail of the original coin-op's most devastating features. Eight characters are available to play, ranging from the strong warrior to the magical sorceress (though bizarrely, Green Elf's gender ambiguity has since seen his/her removal from the series). Attack powers have also been boosted. Along with the standard quick attack, players will be able to access both a turbo power and a special magical ability. Levels are selected from a hub room which leads to eight realms, among which the additions of a dream world and a gigantic floating battleship look interesting. Crucially, however, the move into 3D is proving troublesome. *OPS2*'s playable code indicates that camera angles are to remain rigidly fixed and there will be no function to allow players to move views manually. This is a devastating blow because *Gauntlet* could work extremely well in 3D if only more thought went into establishing a suitable view on the world. Unfortunately the perspective is so short-sighted as to allow players to wander into pitfalls with little visual warning.

Gauntlet Dark Legacy could still prove to be one of the PS2's early multiplayer hits but the true *Gauntlet* aficionado will be hoping that Midway make the bold decision to put the game back into its 2D roots for the next instalment. ☐

ON TARGET? GAUNTLET DARK LEGACY

Can *Gauntlet Dark Legacy* be 'it' or will the series die of starvation after shooting the food?



MULTIPLAYER FUN
The vital element which remains a distinct pleasure.

CAMERA VIEWS
A narrow window on the world with no manual control.

MAGIC SYSTEM
Incredibly varied with wonderfully immense pyrotechnical effects.

GAUNTLET'S LEGACY

If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Hang on...

GAUNTLET (1985)
Created by Ed Logg, Atari's first attempt at a four player arcade game was an instant hit. The opportunity to select one of four characters (Thor, Questor, Thyra or Merlin), each with different abilities was the game's strongest element.

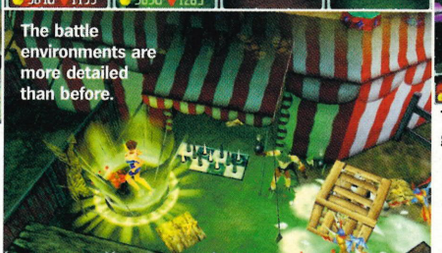
GAUNTLET II (1986)
With such a successful formula Atari didn't wait long to update the series. Fearsome guard dragons, secret rooms and diabolical potions were added to inject even more multiplayer tension into the series.

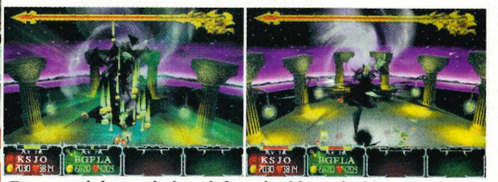
GAUNTLET LEGENDS (1998)
Midway acquired Atari and soon began work on a 3D update of their most successful franchise. New character classes, great end-of-level bosses and unlockable characters made for a refreshing update on PSone.

The on-screen shenanigans are as frenetic as ever.

Arenas are now much more multi-levelled and include lifts.

Where's a light saber when you need one?





Team work is needed to defeat the big end-of-level bad guys. Without a partner you're as good as dead.

PlayStation.2

INFOGRAMES

Nice try sucker.

Can't say you didn't make an impression. What hope did you have? A million bullets with your name on. A barrage of pulse guns to fry your flesh. A band of marauding warrior savages pursuing you through dark and strange arenas. Life is always appreciated best when it's taken.

Unreal TOURNAMENT

THE GLADIATOR SPORT OF THE FUTURE

DIGITAL EXTREMES

EPIC GAMES

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WORDS: SCOTT ANTHONY

RUGBY

Rugby on the PS2 courtesy of EA Sports. Does this mean booze sessions, scarred knees and body hair are now "in the game"?

Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: Creative Assembly
Players: 1-2
Out: 16 May

Rugby's an unusual game. It's an ultra-violent contest that's played for the most part by terminally polite people. It's a curiously fluid game, made up of many disparate elements. And at heart, it's a tactical game – albeit one, which spits, stamps, draws blood and then shakes hands and utters "jolly good fun, that" at the end of every match. Is it any wonder then that developers have tended to have a problem rendering rugby convincingly in videogames to date?

EA Sports is determined to crack this strangely-shaped ball sport though, and to this end it has re-employed coders Creative Assembly (the team behind the fair-to-middling *Rugby 2001* on the PC) to go one better on the PS2. And pleasingly, underneath the avalanche of EA Sports hype, *Rugby* is shaping up better than we could have possibly imagined.

You see Creative Assembly have raided the locker of every successful EA Sports game in existence to produce a unique hybrid of styles that is both satisfying and authentic. The sections of open play are strikingly *FIFA*-esque (particularly the way that hammering the ◎ button will give your man that vital extra burst of speed). Line-outs and other set pieces are also well catered for, and are heavily indebted to the stop-start strategies of American football flagbearer *Madden NFL* et al. And as you would expect, the all-out combat of rucking and mauling are stretching button-bashing affairs in true *Track And Field* stylee, while the need to master angle, power and direction to perform penalties, drop kicks, and conversions successfully, is reminiscent of *Tiger Woods PGA Tour*.

Of course, this mix of genres would have been disastrous without a decent control system – and here there is some pleasing evidence of thought and subtlety on the behalf of the developers. By tapping and holding the shoulder buttons, for example, you can make your charges dummy, faint and vary the length and velocity of your passes impressively.

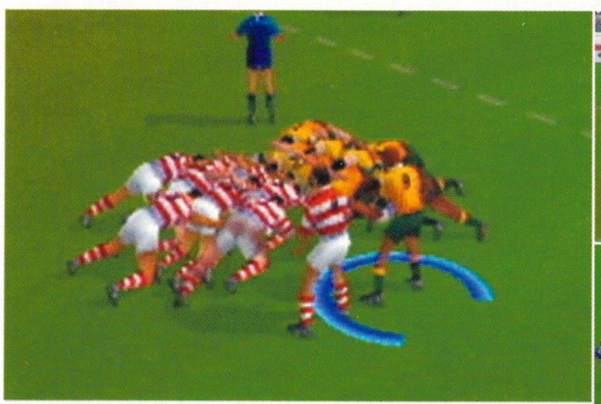
REALLY TRYING

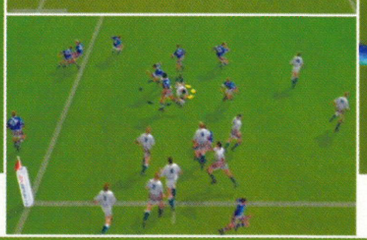
"Rugby, but what's it for?" as Anne Robinson would say. It's for scoring tries like these...

Heroic
A lone Aussie cakewalks his way through the rather hapless Japanese team.

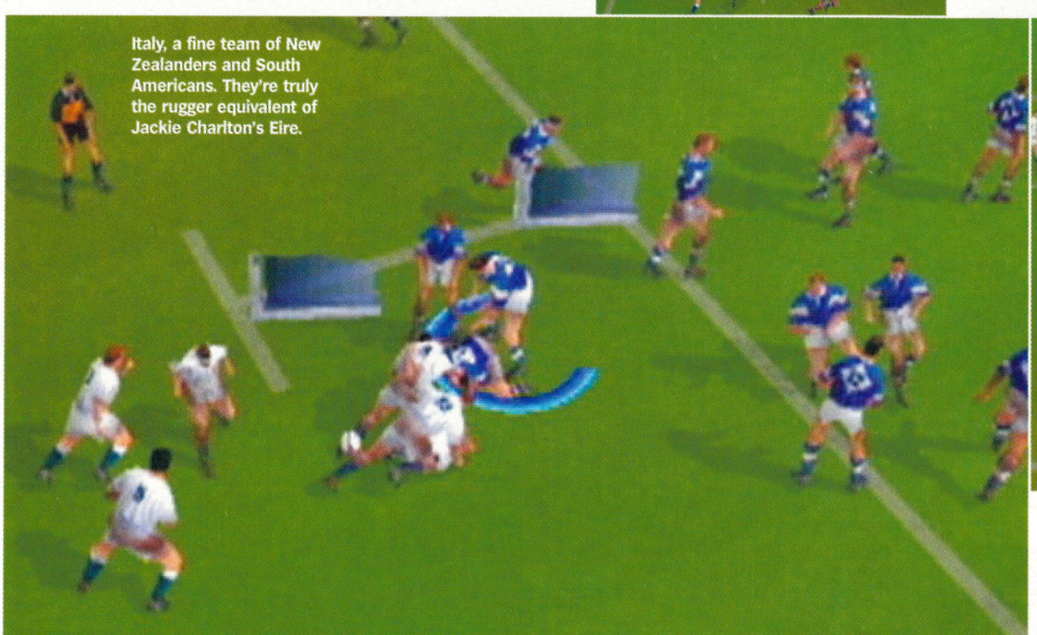
Tough
Plucky Canada dive under English posts. Those cheeky colonial upstarts.

Gritty
And the mighty Lions roar back! Swinging low through the formidable SA defence. Take that, Mr Springboks!

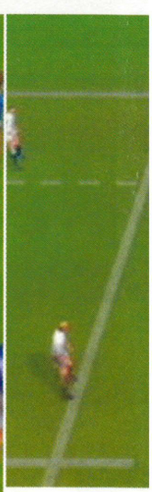




The strength, skill and sheer ability of the Australian pack takes on the, um, well-deserved underdogness of the Japanese.



Italy, a fine team of New Zealanders and South Americans. They're truly the rugger equivalent of Jackie Charlton's Eire.



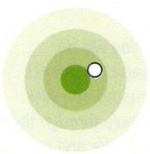
As you would expect from an EA Sports title, the front end of the game is also extremely slick and easy to navigate. There's a Tutorial mode to help you string the basics of the game together as well as the options to rehearse individual moves before a big match, which given the complicated nature of rugby football will, we imagine, be well-nigh indispensable. The matches are *big* too. There's the Six Nations and the World Championship to battle through (along with those trademark Quick Start options) and with all the recognisable leading players of Rugby Union available to choose from, the game promises to be not short on all-important atmosphere.

But we do have some worries. While there's no doubting that all the elements of a top title are present in *Rugby*, they still have to be blended carefully into a satisfying whole. And there are various other niggles such as a rather arthritic camera, which at the moment often cuts you out of the action, deadening the intensity of the experience.

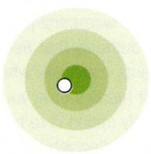
Rugby is certainly a sport that's overdue some mainstream recognition though. And this is an absolutely crucial title for EA Sports, because if they get it right, this could be the game to usher rugby out of the fanatics-only ghetto. □

ON TARGET? RUGBY

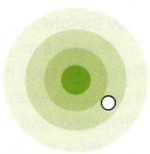
Braving foot and mouth, *Rugby* is puffing and panting to the line. Will it touch down or not though?



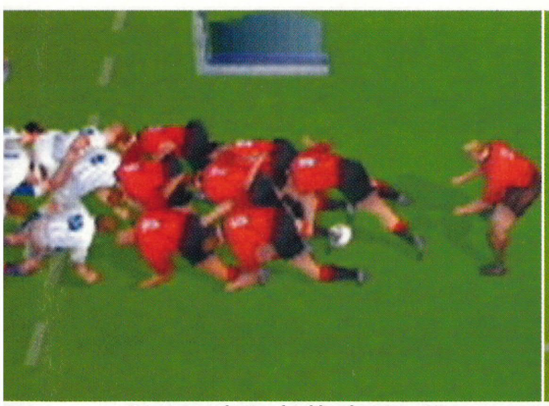
CALCUTTA CUP
Competitive and violent, this game tries to please.



ALL BLACKS
Recognisable stadia and players, there's thrills-a-plenty here.

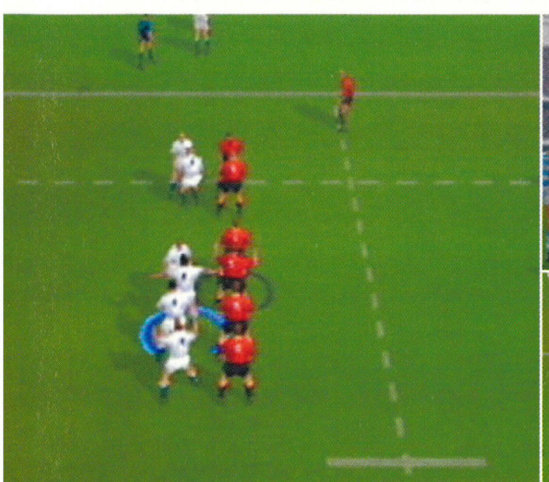


SIN BIN
With a million different elements, can they all gel?

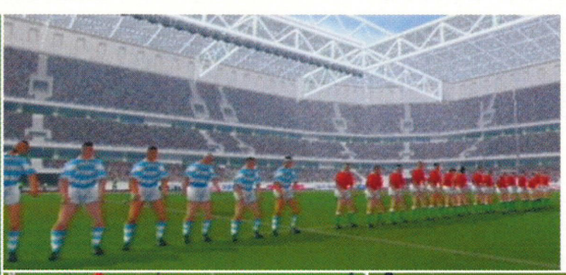


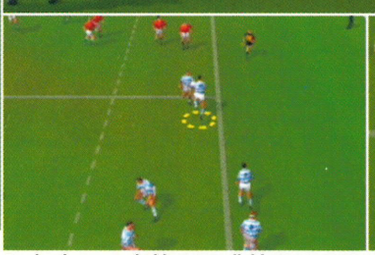
Scrums are button-bushing frenzies of the highest order. Rugby's a man's game see...

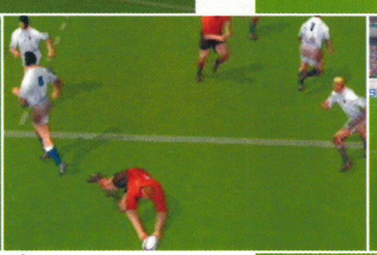
Argentina are a better team then you'd expect – they've certainly got more than enough to worry Neil Jenkin's men.



The line out: Put your hard-practised routines to work in here.



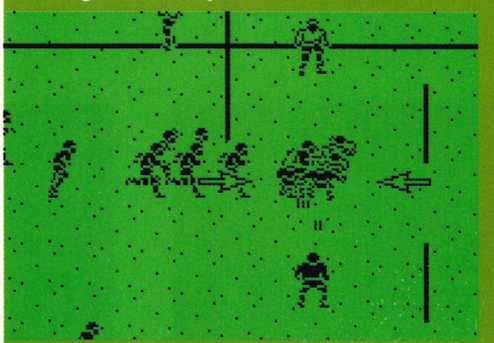




***Rugby* the game is big on, well, big game atmosphere..**

CULT FICTION

Before EA Sports' new PS2 barnstormer, rugby has traditionally been only of, er, cult interest in the crazy world of videogames. Here's why...



Who can forget the, um, esoteric pleasures of Audiogenic's *World Class Rugby* on the ZX Spectrum? Any takers?

No? What about Codies' *Jonah Lomu Rugby*, then? It featured genuine "South African sunshine". No, really...

WORDS: BEN LAWRENCE

RED FACTION

Can Volition's blaster overtake *Quake III*, *Unreal* and *TimeSplitters* to take the FPS crown on PS2? Let the fragging begin...

ON THE DVD

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Volition
Players: 1-4
Release Date: June

As much as you love it, you've got to hope that the ebony-powerhouse of twenty-first century post-console tech that's currently connected to your TV has something more realistic, something more revelatory – hell – just something *more* than the simplified fire-arm fisticuffs of *TimeSplitters* waiting in the wings with which to dazzle, amaze, surprise and enthrall.

The first real contender for that wish-list is Volition's *Red Faction* (originally covered way back in issue #01) and, rapidly approaching completion, can it live up to the massive promise it's exhibited for so long? After having an exclusive play it certainly appears so. The game begins as you witness the brutal murder of your closest colleague, beaten down by a brutal Ultor Corporation guard. Diving into one of the many mining shafts for cover from the ensuing firefight you discover, much to your delight, a bundle of explosive charges. As well as hurling the charges in the direction of the guards and causing much death and severe craters in the mining colony floor thanks to the unique Geo-Mod technology (real-time, arbitrary geometry modification allowing for complete environmental destruction) Volition also seem to have included multiple hidden rooms for discovery with a little Geo-Mod help. The first instance was glimpsing through a crack in a wall to a water logged room behind it – complete with fishes. One case of 'light the blue touch paper and retire to a safe distance' later we'd made ourselves an indoor swimming pool.

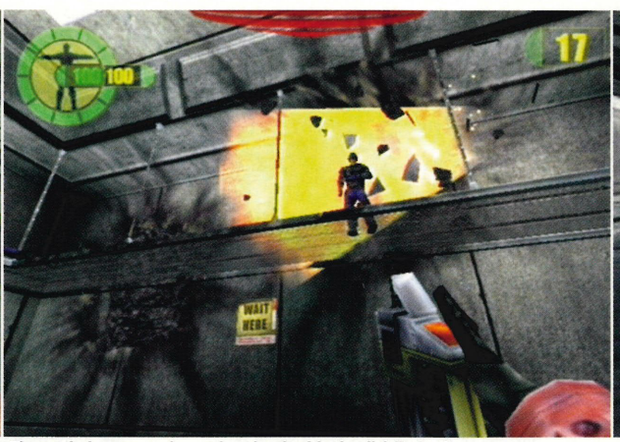
We have it on good authority that *Red Faction* will be littered with such incidents, especially when water is involved. At one point, when Ultor heavies have you cornered in a vast waterlogged cave, the only option is to blast a hole through the ice, lower a submersible mining vehicle into the lake and work your way out through a labyrith of tunnels. A touch we hope to see far more of, and something we've been promised with fighter jets, hovercraft and ATVs all waiting to strut their stuff.

CHANGING ROOMS

Interactive 3D environments will be the shape of things to come...

Geo-Mod is a unique programming device that allows the player to blow the liver out of the surrounding environments at will. If you see a wall and think there might be something worth having a peek at behind it, then you simply aim for your desired area and squeeze the trigger. Nothing could be simpler. Unfortunately, more often than not, we accidentally unleashed a horde of slavering beasts intent on ripping our limbs and throats out.

The game where keys aren't exactly an issue.



Thermal charges and guard make the ideal evil fella barbeque.

You'll occasionally be offered snippets of advice. Ignore at your peril.

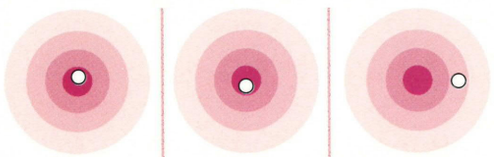
... After five minutes, turn your guard over on the grill, season and continue to cook until golden brown.

Fending off the myriad of brutal attacks from Ultor is a challenge in itself during the early stages, because once the charges are spent, you're left with little more than a pointy stick to do your bidding, while the targetting system doesn't help a great deal either. Hopefully, it should be sorted completely, but at the moment still has the unfortunate habit of immediately locking in on the most immediate bad guy, even when the greatest threat can come from the intelligent guards hiding behind a pillar or an adjacent doorway.

Red Faction is already surpassing the hype. The Martian mining complex drips with atmosphere, giving a true sense that it's far more than just an arena for gratuitous head-popping – we could just be looking at a very real and tangible plot-driven game utilising the first-person perspective for story advancement a la *Half-Life* rather than the usual five minute frag sessions. Until next month's world exclusive review, check out this issue's exclusive trailer on the DVD, and you'll see exactly why we're so hyped. Anything else? Oh yeah – the game also features a thermal imaging cannon that can sense people's body heat behind obstacles, allowing you to fire 'at' them through walls and send them straight to hell with flying concrete shards. Got goose bumps yet? □

ON TARGET? RED FACTION

Red Faction could put some of the PlayStation 2's better first-person shooters to shame. Already impressive, the future beckons...



LIFESPAN
With alternate routes at every turn, this will hold you for hours.

CHARACTERS
Reluctant heroes, and feckless grunts with hungry guns.

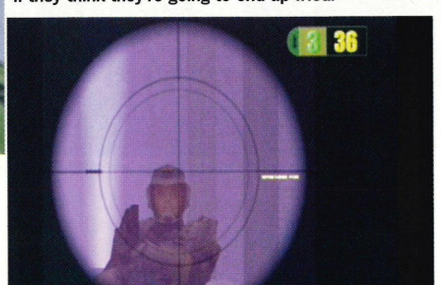
TOTAL RECALL
Good plot-driven stuff but just a little over-familiar...

And Mr Guard became Mr Mess...

Deep inside a reactor you have to be careful where you fire.

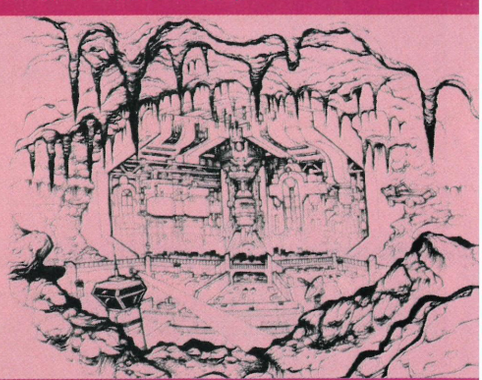
Just about to bring new meaning to the word 'mess room'.

These guards are smart. They'll dive out of your way if they think they're going to end up fried.

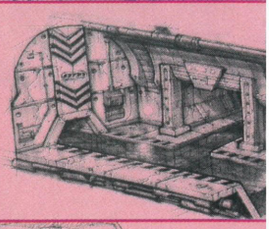


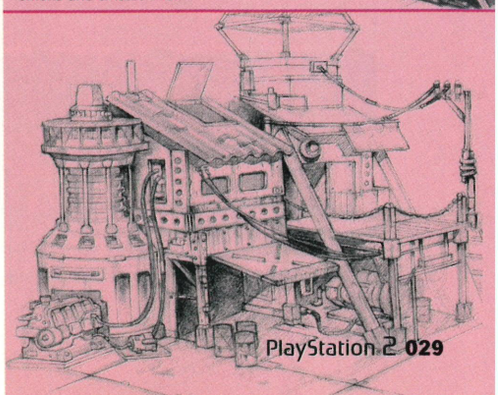
WELCOME TO MARS

And you thought *Total Recall* made the Red Planet look bleak. Passports at the ready.



Attention to detail has been paramount in the development of *Red Faction* with hundreds of concept sketches used to create the perfect Martian atmosphere. What a shame then, that the moment you nab a rocket launcher the whole place goes up in balls of black smoke and twisted metal.





WORDS: LEE HART

NBA STREET

Basketball for basket cases, *NBA Street* says goodbye to the stadia and the rules and hello to trickstyle b-ball on the mean streets of Inner City USA.

Publisher: EA Sports Big
Developer: EA Sports (Canada)
Player: 1-2
Out: June

Unless you were fortunate enough to grow up to be over 6ft 5in tall with hands the size of dustpans, a long, loping stride and the ability to move through the air like a soaring Crazylegs Crane, it's highly unlikely you'll ever have a career in professional basketball. A sport for preternaturally large men with a preternatural talent for putting a ball through a hoop, basketball is one of those activities that we mere mortals can only truly appreciate through the medium of videogames.

As well as being by far the best US sport (at least in our opinion) b-ball also translates to gaming better than most and although we've already seen two mediocre examples on PS2 – *NBA Live 2001* and *ESPN NBA 2Night* – when the translation is as original as *NBA Street*, yet another hoops game is more than welcome. Hailing from the same EA Sports Big label that brought us the sexy snowboarder *SSX*, *NBA Street* is aiming for an equally bodacious brand of basketball.

Thanks to the NBA license, you'll find all the teams, players and strips present and correct in this game but there's absolutely no sign of the stadiums and their cheering crowds and varnished wooden floors. As its title suggests, this is street basketball, played on urban courts dotted around the US with all the usual b-ball rules chucked right out the window.

Taking it's cue from Midway's bonkers arcade-style *NBA Jam* franchise and pushing the basketball boundaries even further, *NBA Street* focuses as much on performing tricks as scoring baskets. The trick system has the same basic setup as *SSX*: by holding down any combination of the shoulder buttons and shooting, you can execute a range of fancy dribbles, spins and cross-overs to bamboozle the opposition.

Besides providing a welcome opportunity to showboat, there's another incentive for tricking to the max – it fills a Specials meter which adds one to your score for every basket hit and, amusingly, subtracts one from your opponent's tally.

Although still fairly early code, the preview version of *NBA Street* we have in our mitts is already playing like a winner. The animation could do with a bit of a tweak – players are somewhat stiff and angular in their movements at present – but apart from that minor quibble, the gameplay mechanics are all there for a quality game of hoops.

As ever in basketball games it's usually a case of whoever scores the final basket wins the match but, as constantly-reforming Eighties trio Bananarama once growled, here it's a case of 'It ain't what you do it's the way that you do it'. Think tricks, think style, think slam-dunkin' some funk and there's no doubt *NBA Street* will make all your hoop dreams come true. If it's entertaining three-on-three basketball you're after, with passers-by stopping to watch the games dressed only in their undies, then you've come to the right place. □

ON TARGET? NBA STREET

It's still limbering up at court-side but *NBA Street* is well on track to hit a tasty three-pointer from downtown.

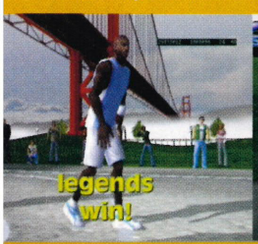
TRICKS
Basketball gods with skill oozing out of their size 15s.

HOOPZ DREAMS
All very good but, like, how similar is this to *NBA Hoopz*?

ANIMATION
Slightly jerky and stilted. Think Mr Benn, not Mr Jordan.

AIR JORDANS

It might be cheating to use him but his inclusion in *NBA Street* proves Michael Jordan is still the main man.



1. Michael Jordan. The man himself. Shaved head, number 23 on his back, costly sneakers on his feet: we're talking about an iconic, genius sportsman up there with Muhammad Ali, Pele and their ilk.

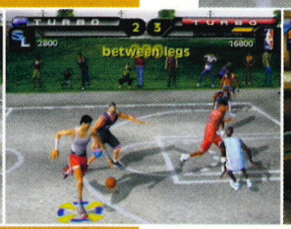
2. Blocking. A job usually left to the *really* big men but with Jordan's near-perfect stats he can do every job on court near-perfectly. There are no goaltending rules so just time your jump and reject that ball.

3. Slam-dunking. Jordan's true forte. Spinning past the opposition, man and ball in perfect harmony, taking it to the basket, taking to the air and slamming the ball in with the grace and style of an extremely tall ballerina.

4. Long shots. Sadly, in *NBA Street* baskets from downtown only score two points rather than the usual three. Don't let this stop you though as, unlike any other player in the game, Jordan is incredible at long-range shots.

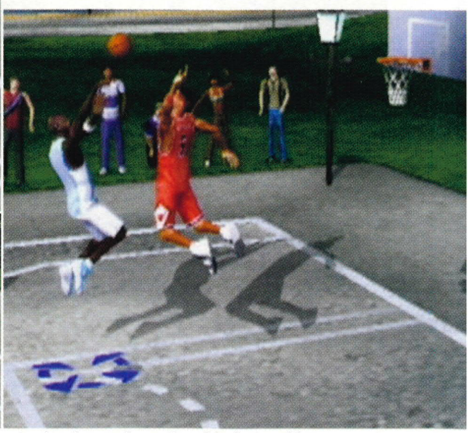
The full range of shots: Lay-ups are smooth, slam-dunks are funky and alleyoops are clearly insane in the membrane.

Never get in the way of a Shaq attack!



Go crazy with the tricks and rack up some points.

Fictional street teams are available as well as all the pro NBA sides.



Jordan hangs loose in mid air. Smokin'.

WORDS: MIKE GOLDSMITH

THE JUNGLE BOOK RHYTHM 'N' GROOVE

Strut like a tiger, flap like a vulture, fall over like a monkey... It's the Bemani game for Disney freaks. My go!

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Ubi Soft
Players: 1-2
Out: May

Regular *OPS2* watchers will be aware of the Japanese gaming cult known as Bemani. For the uninitiated, Bemani games involve prodding wildly at a piece of plastic shaped vaguely like a guitar/set of decks/keyboard/harpsichord in time to on-screen prompts. One of the cornerstones of the Bemani movement however is *Dance Dance Revolution*. The aim of the game is to lump around a dancing mat (see Dance Yo Ass Off) in time to the music. But while this all looks fantastic performed by orange-faced arcade otaku, it looks a little less impressive when stomped out by pregnant teenage mothers at the end of Weston Super Mare pier. Thus Konami's reposition of *DDR* (now titled *Dancing Stage*) as a funky exercise workout complete with calorie burn-o-meter and, finally, thus this – *The Jungle Book Rhythm 'N' Groove*.

In a sentence, *The Jungle Book Rhythm 'N' Groove* is a Bemani game for "kids of all ages" (ie kids). In another sentence, it's *Dance Dance Revolution* crossed with *The Jungle Book*. And in another sentence, PSone owners will be extremely familiar with this game as it's a PS2-buffed version of last year's *The Jungle Book Groove Party*. From the classic *Jungle Book* story line that carries you through the increasingly-difficult levels in one-player mode to the two-player dance-off where you can play as Mowgli, Baloo, King Louie or any one of ten available characters, it's exactly the same as before. Of course, the power of PS2 means the characters are way better looking, the unlockable video of Lou Bega singing a Bega-ed up *Bare Necessities* is DVD-Video quality and everything's just, well, *nicer*, but if you've already got the PSone original, you'd *really* have to be a Disney fan/completist/freakazoid to buy this game too.

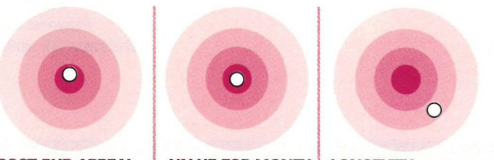
So far *Rhythm 'N' Groove* is shaping up to be easily as good as its predecessor. Yes, it's aimed at nippers but ramp that difficulty level up to Expert and harder dance steps will have you sweating while the power-ups (extra combos you need to hit to zap your CPU opponent and progress to the next stage) are genuinely taxing, even in the earliest of the nine stages. Thankfully, the game boasts a smooth learning curve that kids will stick with thanks to the reward of lush 3D cut-scenes while kidults won't care because they're too busy falling over and singing along thanks to the Karaoke option.

Proven characters, classic tunes, excellent new songs (check out the Chili Peppers-esque *Bananas In The Coconut Tree* and the unforgettable *One With The Snake In It That Sounds Like Tindersticks*), a lounge-destroying two-player mode... *Rhythm 'N' Groove* might not be quite the finished article (some of the animation is still a little clunky) but even at this stage, it's had the office making prime fools of themselves at every opportunity. There can be no finer praise.

And now imagine all of that with booze. □

ON TARGET? THE JUNGLE BOOK RHYTHM 'N' GROOVE

It's for kids, it's for kidults, it's guaranteed to get you frugging – but for how long does the appeal of dancing monkeys hold up?



POST-PUB APPEAL
It might look for kids but add half a bottle of Taboo and...

VALUE FOR MONEY
Game and dancing mat for the price of a single game. Bargain!

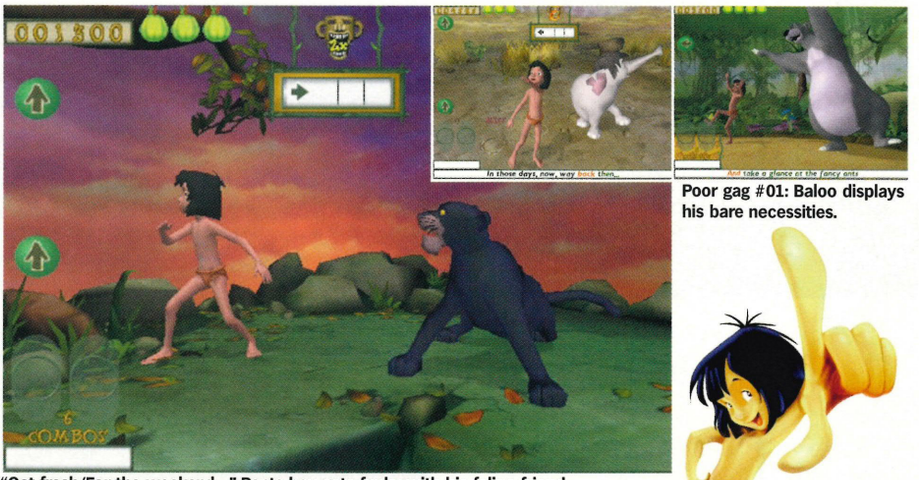
LONGEVITY
Plenty of difficulty options, a few extras but only nine levels.

DANCE YO ASS OFF...

For the price of a PS2 game, Ubi Soft have thrown the dancing mat in for free. Just as well really...

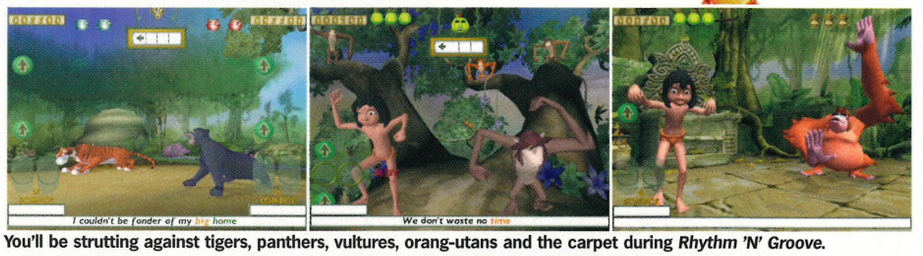
Coin-op jockeys and fans of *Dancing Stage* on the PSone will be familiar with the dancing mat. Basically a plastic replication of the fixed metal stage seen in your local arcade, simply plug it in and play. See the ↑ on screen? Step on the ↑. Need to hit ⊗ to progress? Step on the ⊗ then. It's a cross between a breakdancer's lino square and a Dual Shock and it's surprisingly responsive. Take care with the two feet moves, take off your shoes (easier to slide about) and most of all, don't worry about looking like a prat because everyone else will.

Oh, and before anyone asks – yes, you can use it to play other PS2 games. Trust us when we say that after playing *ESPN International Track & Field* with a dance mat, you'll never be the same again...

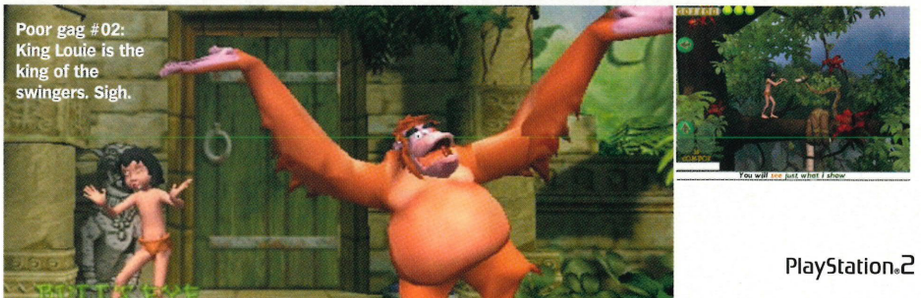


"Get fresh/For the weekend..." Pants boy gets funky with his feline friend.

Poor gag #01: Baloo displays his bare necessities.



You'll be strutting against tigers, panthers, vultures, orang-utans and the carpet during *Rhythm 'N' Groove*.



Poor gag #02: King Louie is the king of the swingers. Sigh.

WORDS: BEN LAWRENCE

WACKY RACES
STARRING DASTARDLY & MUTTLEY

Start your engines and charge up your extra large comedy mallets, a different kind of racer's in town...

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Infogrames Sheffield
Players: 1-4
Release: 27 June

When something is described as 'wacky' it conjures up horrific images. It brings to mind ideas of evil office-workery people who, with a drunken party hat and Malibu breath tell you through slurred waffle, hiccups and over bearing hugs that, "I'm mad me! Everyone says I'm MAD!" It's also synonymous with the Hawaiian shirt-wearing git that was Timmy Mallet. Fear not though. *Wacky Races* is, besides being 'wacky', turning into a darn fine game.

An enhanced port over of the Dreamcast version, PS2's interpretation of Hanna Barbera's motoring melee boasts 30% more levels than the DC classic. Levels such as Snowfall Peaks, the Wild Frontier and Redwood Pines which all made their debut in the original are back but Infogrames Sheffield has also incorporated an entirely new city level with a further five tracks to bomb around. The racers now have the opportunity to race through Central Park, an airport, downtown New York, Manhattan docks and even across rooftops. Yikes!

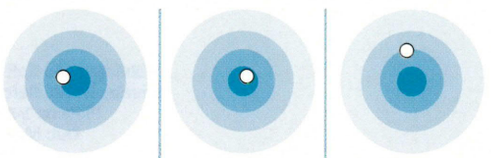
The environments that already exist aren't straight ports either. The development team has conscientiously concentrated on making each course more interactive than it was previously. Incidental animation has been upped to bring each area to life and now plays an important role in the driver's progression through the levels. As well as providing aesthetically pleasing aspects such as cascades of butterflies in the air or fully churn-upable flower beds, other vehicles will hinder your progress. Pirate ships docked in the harbour will fire cannonballs at you or you could be called upon to run the gauntlet at a level crossing. 'Triggered' animation has also been included. These are subtle effects that occur when your car acts upon them. Brush past an autumnal tree and leaves will tumble from it, puddles splash up when you drive through them and fences bend should you hit them.

Of course, the highlight of *Wacky Races* is the drivers themselves. All the characters and cars from the cartoon including favourites such as Penelope Pitstop and the Creepy Coupe make an appearance, but this time Dastardly and Muttley play a greater role – hence the slight name change for PS2. A specially developed Arcade mode will allow you to drive around the environments in the Mean Machine, *Driver*-style, discovering 'mirrors'. Drive through one of these and you'll find yourself on a reverse version of the track.

Due for release at the beginning of summer, *Wacky Races Starring Dastardly & Muttley* is likely to cause a PS2 stir. Not only are there new tracks, an Arcade mode and greater interaction with our two favourite villains but the frame rate is looking much higher with secret routes, characters and vehicles oozing from the woodwork. Dastardly and Muttley never won a *Wacky Race*. Soon you'll be able to change that. ☐

ON TARGET? WACKY RACES

The DC version was greatly loved, this enhanced PS2 version could be the cartoon equivalent of *Gran Turismo 3: A-spec*! Well, maybe.



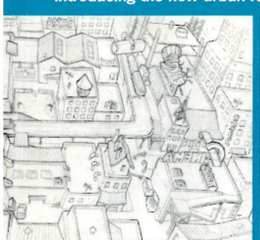
ANIMANIACS
Brightly coloured and jaunty, just like the cartoons.

CHARACTERS
It's got the lot with added Muttley for your delectation.

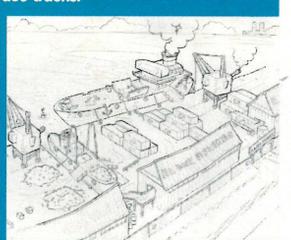
ORIGINALITY
We've seen it before but that shouldn't stop it being good.

NEW SKIDS ON THE BLOCK

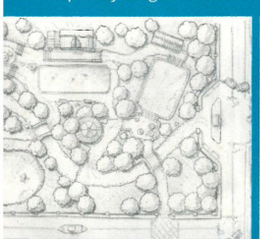
Introducing the new urban race tracks.



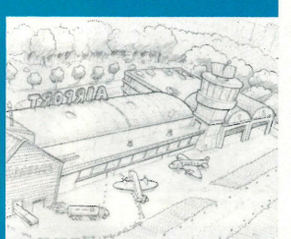
Roof Tops
Dodge monorails and watch out for mad construction workers – could be especially dangerous in cars.



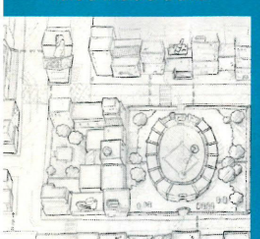
Dock
Piles of slippery wet fish and funny looking women lurking in alleys. This ain't no place for our innocent racers.



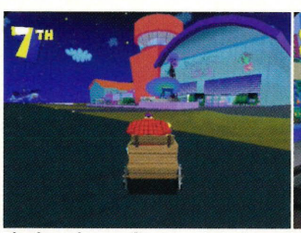
Central Park
Watch out for the junkies, muggers, rapists and discarded needles and you'll have a whale of a time.

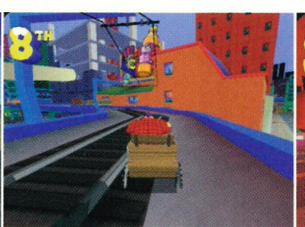


Airport
Hardly the best place for a race, you'd better be careful you don't mistake the runway for a road.

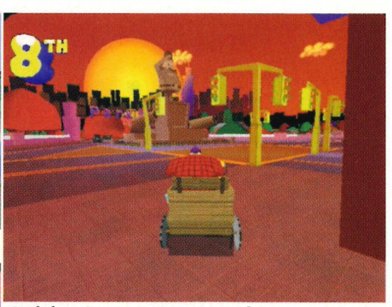


Down Town
Keep the doors locked and don't stop for anyone. Or take a detour straight through the middle of the baseball pitch.

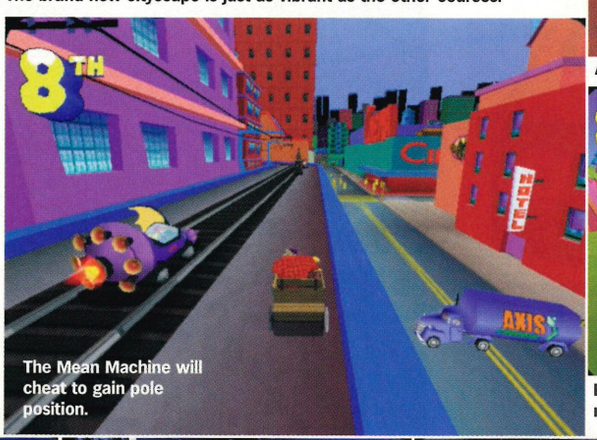




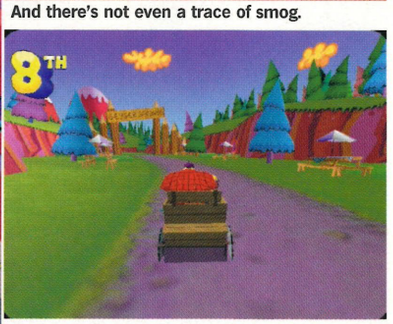
The brand new cityscape is just as vibrant as the other courses.



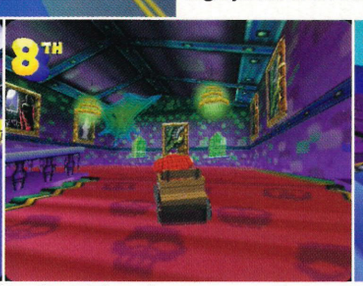
And there's not even a trace of smog.

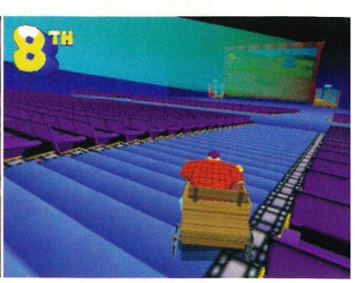


The Mean Machine will cheat to gain pole position.



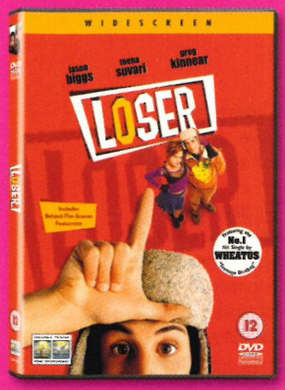
Keep your eyes open for Yogi and Boo Boo, they might just be in the bushes together.





From the harbour to the snowy wastes, to a haunted castle and giant cinema, every track oozes Hanna Barbera style visuals.

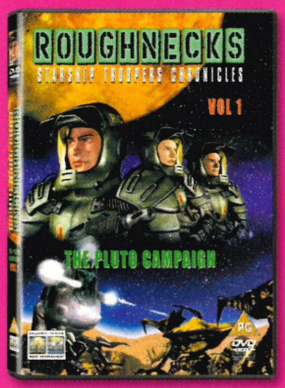
GREAT MOVIES IN MAY ON DVD VIDEO



Re-uniting **American Pie** co-stars Jason Biggs and Mena Suvari comes a quirky, romantic comedy, Loser. After coming to New York for college, Paul (Biggs) is branded a loser by his roommates, but luckily befriends fellow student Dora (Suvari). Will these kindred spirits stay "just friends" or can they work things out by daring to be different?

SPECIAL FEATURES INCLUDE:
Music Video of No. 1 Hit Single "Teenage Dirtbag" by Wheatus, Behind-the-scenes and interviews with Amy Heckerling and cast and the International Trailer.

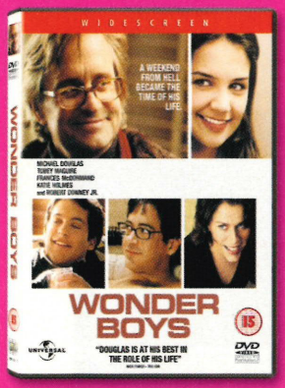
RELEASE DATE: 7th May



Two years after the Global Army's victory over the savage warrior insects, young Rico, Carmen and Carl lured by the prospect of fun, travel and adventure, enlist in the military. But their romantic visions are suddenly shattered when the bugs return... big time. Based on the action classic movie Starship Troopers, Roughnecks is a visually stunning DVD, with all the Sci-Fi appeal of Paul Verhoeven's film.

SPECIAL FEATURES INCLUDE:
Photogallery, Animated Menus

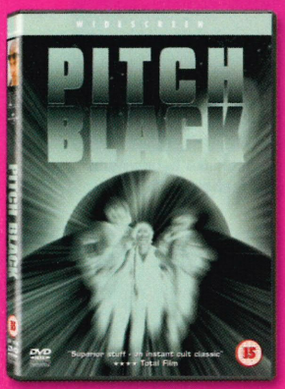
RELEASE DATE: 7th May



Grady is a famous writer who is also a professor who was avoiding the editor who came to the party... that was thrown by the chancellor... who was in love with the writer... and this is the student... who could change his life... if only the writer would let him. Michael Douglas puts in the performance of his career in this Bafta and Oscar® nominated drama. Also stars Frances McDormand, Katie Holmes & Robert Downey Junior.

SPECIAL FEATURES TBC

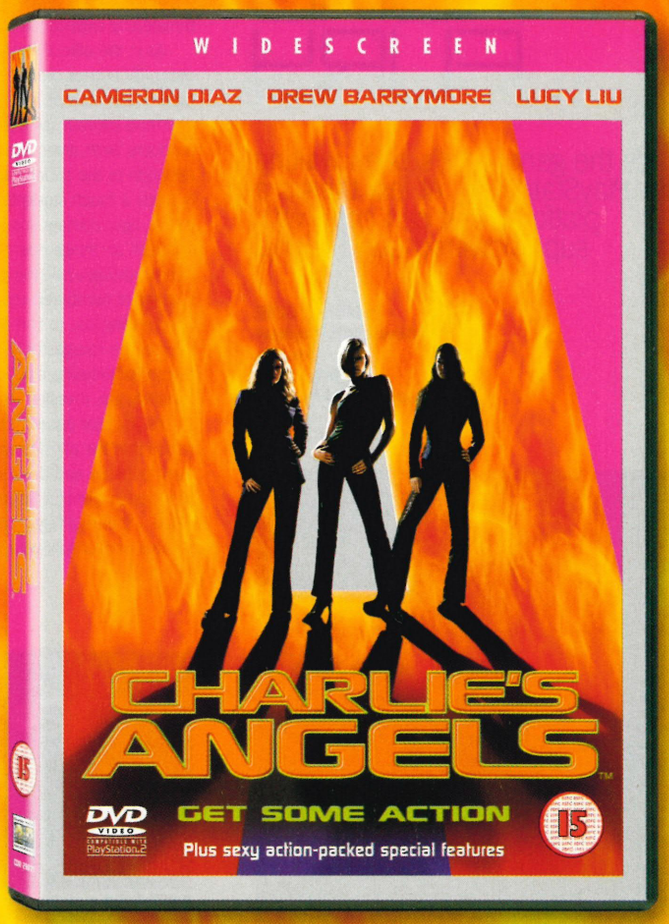
RELEASE DATE: 7th May



Marooned on a seemingly lifeless planet inhabited by an army of alien creatures which stalk the night, a group of desperate passengers turns to a murderous convict (Vin Diesel) with an appetite for destruction and eerie eyes that can guide them through the darkness. Are you afraid of the dark? You will be...

SPECIAL FEATURES INCLUDE:
Director 's Commentary, 'Into Pitch Black' featurette, Web Cast/Rave Footage and Production Notes

RELEASE DATE: 28th May



They're beautiful, they're brilliant and they work for Charlie. In Charlie's Angels, a sexy, high-octane update of the popular hit show, Natalie (Diaz), Dylan (Barrymore) and Alex (Liu), alongside faithful lieutenant Bosley (Murray), must foil an elaborate murder-revenge plot that could not only destroy individual privacy and corporate security worldwide, but spell the end of Charlie and his Angels. Adventure has never been so beautiful.

SPECIAL FEATURES INCLUDE:

5 AMAZING FEATURETTES, COMMENTARY BY DIRECTOR MCG, 2 MUSIC VIDEOS INCLUDING THE SMASH HIT "INDEPENDENT WOMAN" BY DESTINY'S CHILD, DELETED AND EXTENDED SCENES, TALENT FILES, TRAILERS, 3 EASTER EGGS

Release Date: 21st May 2001

Available from HMV

topdogfordvd

www.cthe.co.uk

UNIVERSAL

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COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT

WORDS: NICK JONES

ATV OFFROAD FURY

It's the game that's been waiting for PlayStation 2... At last there's a platform that can cope with superpowered quad biking.

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Rainbow Studios
Players: 1-2
Release Date: July 2001

All terrain vehicles as they are known by professionals (quad bikes to us) are those four-wheeled supercharged, glorified lawn mowers that are made for one reason and one reason alone – to drive as fast as possible up the sides of mountains and churn up the countryside. They're American in invention and ideal subject matter for a videogame you'd assume, but it's only since the dawn of PlayStation 2 that such racing madness can be done justice. Only with intricately modelled landscapes and realistic physics could you hope to simulate anything that comes close to the life-threatening experience of driving one of these quads.

As in the official sport you can compete against other ATV nutters on the relative safety of indoor man-made racetracks or, if you fancy the wind in your hair and mud up your tail pipe, you can head for the great outdoors. Both areas require the player to pay close attention to the surface. Racing on the indoor courses is pretty a much straightforward speedway race – big jumps, tight corners and so on. But when you get into the fresh air things open up a little. Instead of getting a normal racing track, the game loads up a vast area with a series of numbered checkpoints to drive through, encouraging you to find the quickest route around the course. The ravages of the elements create some ideal terrain for jumping, skidding, performing stunts and generally just messing around.

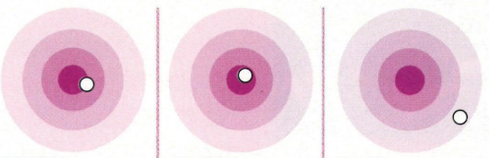
As you tear around the different courses you'll notice that the physics are especially good as your quad bobs up and down on its independent four-wheel suspension, giving a feeling unlike any regular racing game – there's always a danger that you'll come a cropper and unseat your rider if you try a particularly ambitious jump. This handling further adds to the enjoyment of the game, and thrills can be gained by just burning around the course, rather than taking the competition too seriously.

As well as a Racing mode, you'll be able to take part in a Stunt Challenge and a Career section which is basically a combination of both. All pretty standard stuff, but with sprawling landscapes for you to race on and explore, *ATV* is something a bit different to your average speed frenzy. One element we haven't exactly been enamoured by though is the thrash guitar soundtrack accompanying the US version we played – this should be remedied with something more appropriate for the game's release in the UK.

It is the buzz of the racing itself that makes *ATV* stand out from others of the genre – not only are you racing against insane-minded riders but you're fighting a battle with your own quad. This, the huge number of tracks, areas and the sheer mud- and grit-flecked joy of riding a quad bike should mark *ATV Offroad Fury* as a racer to look out for come July. □

ON TARGET? ATV OFFROAD FURY

Impressive physics, huge landscapes, buckets of fun to play... Can the US-flavoured thrills of *ATV Offroad* make a dent in the UK charts?



SCENERY
Quite literally miles and miles of national parks to race in.

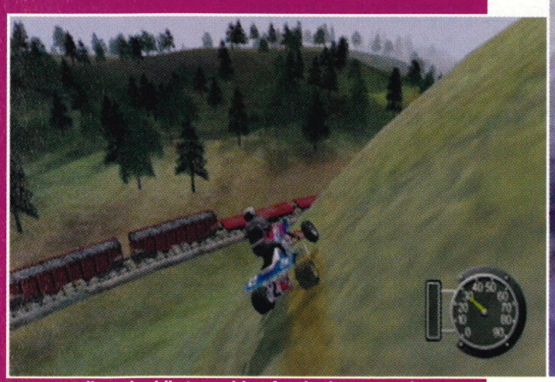
PHYSICS
Like the apple on Newton's head, *ATV* hits the mark.

TUNES
Say NO! to death metal in-game soundtracks.

I NEED DIRECTION

It's all in the landing – so face the right way, nagdammit!

Because the ground undulates with wonderful detail and the physics are so good, positioning your quad for landing from the frequent jumps is vital – landing on a hill will severely slow you down, while hitting a down slope will give your quad that extra bit of momentum and speed. To do this you have to change the direction of your quad in midair – much as you would with a snowboard in *SSX*. You are, aren't you?



Adjust the bike's position for the best speed.

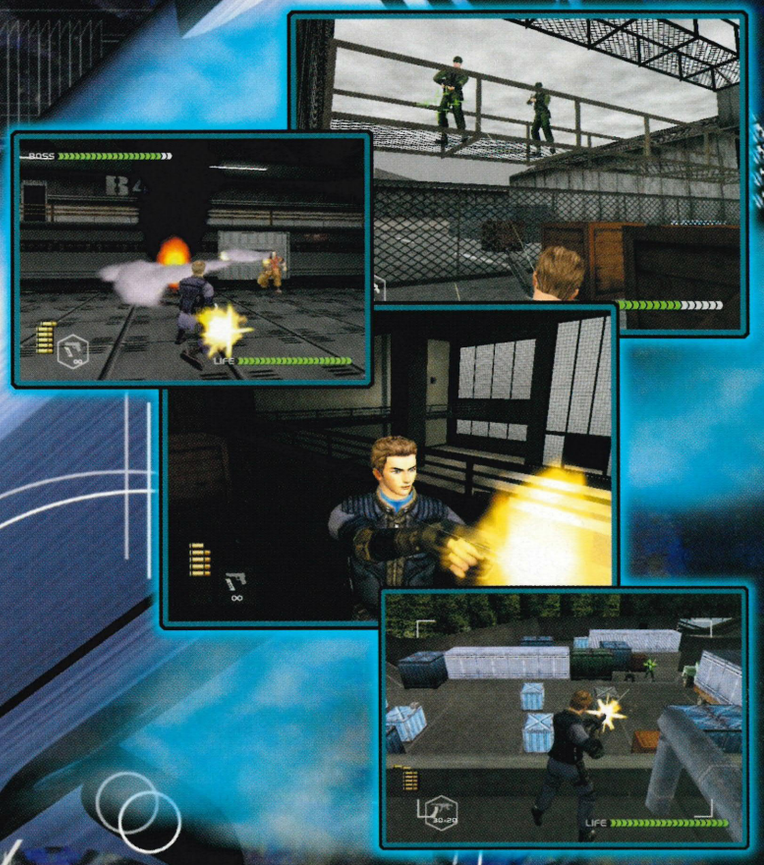
Suitably for a racing game where surface is everything, there are different weather conditions. Icy tracks, above, make for, um, *interesting* handling...

Getting a good height from jumps is essential if you aren't to get left behind.

That crater may look like background scenery but you're about to fall into it.

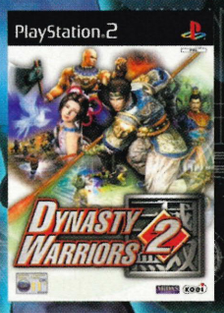
Quickly switch camera for the best view.

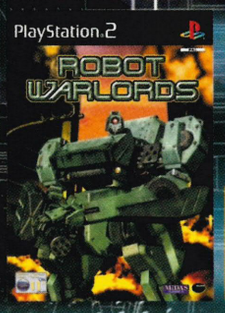
"ONE OF THE BEST SHOOT 'EM UPS AROUND - PSW"



OPERATION WINBACK

Also available from Midas





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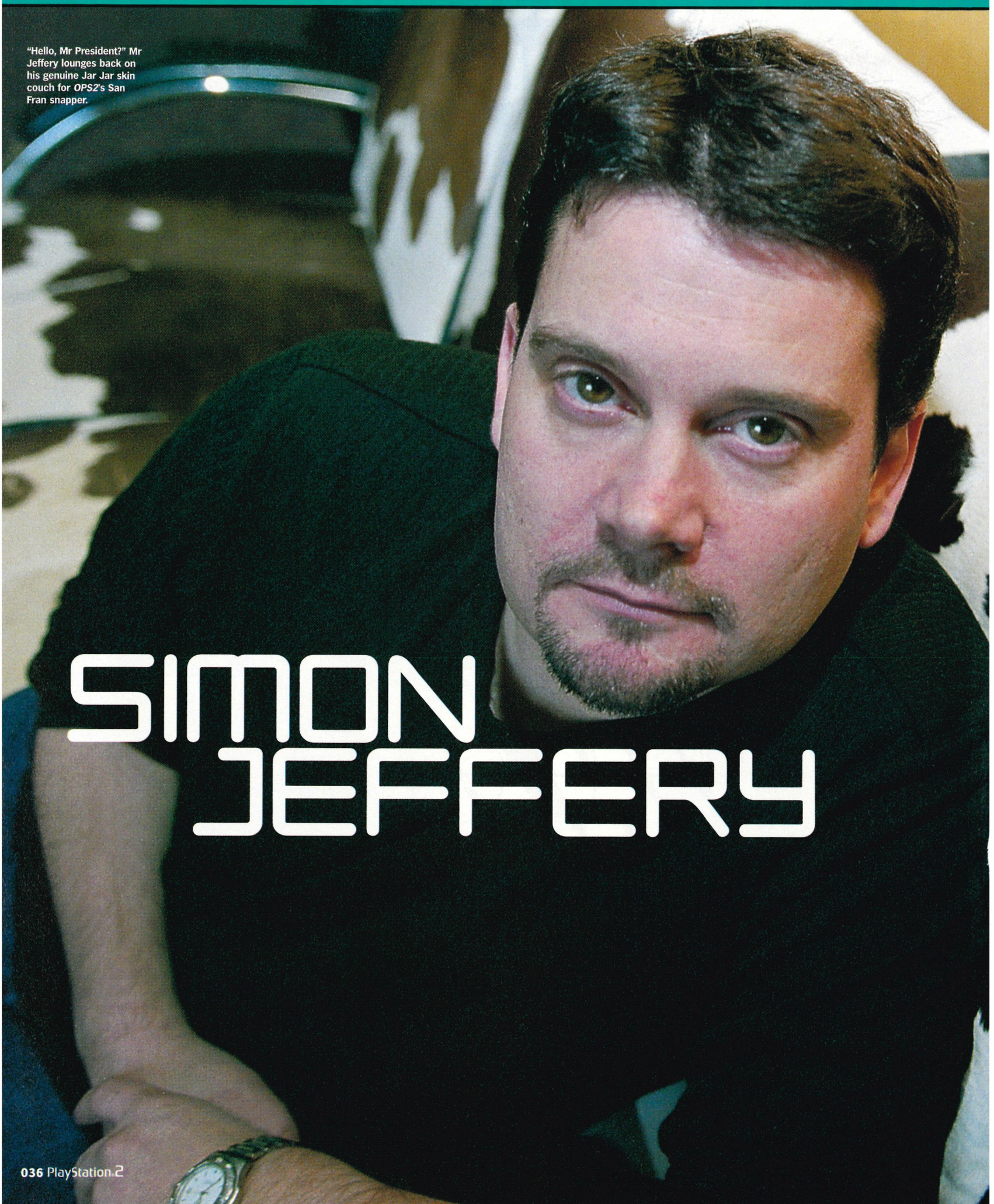


"Hello, Mr President?" Mr Jeffery lounges back on his genuine Jar Jar skin couch for *OPS2*'s San Fran snapper.

SIMON JEFFERY

WORDS: MIKE GOLDSMITH/PHOTOGRAPHY: ELENA DORFMAN

"After *Episode III*, there are no more *Star Wars* movies. We at LucasArts will not just have to reinvent ourselves, but to some extent reinvent *Star Wars*..."

If there ever was a fight to take on, this is it for Simon Jeffery. As newly-installed President of LucasArts, not only does he have the task of carrying on the torch of *Star Wars* when *Episode III* shuffles off this intergalactic coil, he's also got the small job of reinventing the California-based company, revitalising classic titles for PS2 and clearing the company's name when it comes to dubious console licences. It's a tough job, and someone's gotta do it. But hands up who thought it would be an *Elite*-obsessed marine biologist from Cornwall?

"WE'VE GOT WEATHER IN THE HIGH SEVENTIES"

You join *OPS2* on the Transatlantic blower on the first day of Spring. The United Kingdom's ecosystem has decided to celebrate the passing of this date by depositing several tonnes of snow onto the country's highways and byways. In California however, it's a different story. Despite it still being way before midday, LucasArts is enjoying more than a generous helping of sunshine – and despite *OPS2*'s envious grumblings, it's well deserved. The recently-released *Star Wars: Starfighter* has beamed straight into the top of the USA's PS2 charts and looks like doing exactly the same thing this side of the Pond.

After some less than spectacular games for PSone, LucasArts are pushing the boat out for PS2 and with both the upcoming *Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing* and the recently-announced PS2 port of *Escape From Monkey Island* (see page 59), things are looking decidedly skywards again.

All of which leaves Simon Jeffery a busy but obviously chuffed man. The last time *OPS2* talked to President of LucasArts was last August, where Jeffery talked of a 'reinvention' for the company. Yes, it would continue to release *Star Wars* console games but now with the same sophistication as their PC equivalents. And yes, it would continue to ⊡

focus on *Star Wars*, but it would also strive for a future where Luke, Han and chums made up only 50% of the company's output. And finally, yes, it did have plans for online gaming. Big plans.

So, big plans, big money and seven months on, it's a big talk that Jeffery is still walking. You might expect such unblinking confidence – his favourite word is an emphatic 'absolutely' – to come from a lantern-jawed Californian exec, but possibly not from a ex-pat Brit who started his career as a 'jack of all trades' at a then nascent EA.

It's from small acorns that such confidence grows and where British snow might be less than conducive to nurturing self-belief, it seems that the Californian sunshine is moving things along nicely. Time then for *OPS2* to find out what happens next for *Star Wars*, for LucasArts and, of course, to ask Jeffery that most obvious of *Star Wars*-related questions. What's your favourite squid?

So, what's your favourite squid?
(Mock abruptly) I don't have one.

The reason we ask is that it says on your CV that you started off life as a marine biologist...
I specialised in Marine Biology at University College London. As soon as I left college, I went onto a Marine Biology research trip. That turned into work for two years. I was on a Greek island for a couple of years, working in environmental research on seals and turtles. The field project finished, I wrote up the paper, got it published and my employer then 'strongly encouraged' me to go and do a PhD so they could send me off to such exciting places as the Antarctic for five years.

Didn't fancy that much?
I didn't fancy that at all! After working on a Greek island for two years, the thought of going back to university for another four years was just horrifying, so I thought I'd better find myself a real job. I was a big fan of the gaming industry, Electronics Arts was my 'favourite' company – if you look at it that way – and they were opening up in the UK at that time. I pestered them and got the job.

You've previously described yourself as a 'gaming obsessive'. On that Greek island, was it a case of turtles by day and *Tetris* by night?
Kind of (laughs). When I was in Greece, I didn't have a whole bunch of access to games. I guess I had my Commodore 64, but that was it. I had my mum going to WH Smiths, buying up all the game mags, and then mailing them out to me in Greece.

So what did she think when you quit to work in videogames?
My parents thought it was just a phase, and that I'd get a real job in the end. Going into computer games would just keep me quiet for a few months, and then I'd have to find myself a real job. I think they're still trying to figure out exactly what it is that I do.

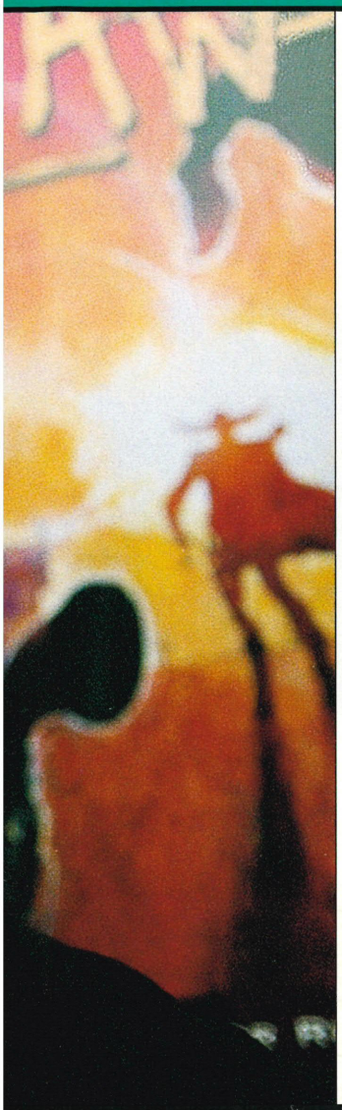
Could you have seen yourself as President of LucasArts back then?
I would've had no idea whatsoever. I knew after just a couple of weeks at Electronic Arts that I knew I wanted to build my long-term career in the gaming industry. I knew I'd found my home. I could definitely see myself in the gaming industry in the year 2000 but President of LucasArts? I would've been shocked, to say the least, if anyone had suggested that to me at the time.

//Fans want to see *Star Wars* stories fleshed out by interactive means//

So how did you get started at Electronic Arts?
EA were just setting up and had hired their first few employees. They were running ads in *Popular Computing Weekly*, so I just cut out one of those ads and wrote into them several times until they said, 'Come in and chat'. I went in and they eventually offered me a job in Customer Service. At that time, EA had so few employees that everyone did pretty much everything – one minute, you'd be doing what you were paid to do, the next you'd be up in the warehouse racking games, then helping out on spreadsheets, then plugging wires into someone's computer. It was all hands to the deck.

How different is the videogames industry now than when you started working in it? And how different is LucasArts to Electronic Arts?
When my parents and friends asked me why on Earth I wanted to work in such a small industry, I always said the merging of technology and entertainment would lead to success in the long-term. But even though I 'predicted' it, I never really appreciated just how big it would get. When you look at the potential side of this market in the next few years, it's pretty staggering – we are an increasingly large segment of the overall entertainment industry. That's exciting.

LucasArts is very different to the early days of Electronic Arts, but I feel one of the reasons EA have been so successful is that even in the early days, they approached it as a business rather than just a bit of fun. The companies that are successful now – and I include LucasArts within that group – are the ones treating it as a formal business.



Is there a difference between the US and UK approach – America seeing it as a interactive entertainment industry, where the UK has a tradition of companies growing from a bedroom hobby?
What's really important is to have a mixture of business and fun – because this is the gaming industry. Most people are here because they see it as fun and like playing games. I think that's absolutely vital to maintain that. The second it becomes a nuts and bolts cat food industry, a lot of things will fall apart and you won't see the same kind of creativity as we have now.

Before you became President at LucasArts, you were Director of Development. Do you miss being so 'hands on'?
I still like to be very, very, very hands on – a lot of people here probably think I'm too hands on. I like to be involved in every aspect of the business because I am passionate about games and still love to play games.

I like to play games in development, spend time with the teams watching how things are going, spend time with marketing looking at the packs and adverts they're doing, spend time talking to journalists like yourself to find out their views. I wouldn't be doing this if it was purely a business job – I do it because it keeps me in the gaming industry.

Are you still a game fan?
Absolutely.

You report to the Board, of which George Lucas is a Chairman. What's he like as a boss?
He's very supportive. He's always had an intense interest in the interactive gaming industry. George is a storyteller and he sees what we do as an exciting way of telling new stories. He's very involved in what we do. While it's very different from the normal company set-up, we have a very strong relationship with our corporate parent.

You report to him once a month?
Twice a month.

So what was the first thing he said to you?
I think it was, 'Welcome'.

A 'Welcome to the Dark Side' welcome?
A friendly welcome (laughs).

LucasArts currently have a very schizophrenic reputation – they make fantastic adventures games for the PC but recently the games for PSone have been dubious to say the least.
I think our approach to the console market has been very random, and not at all strategic. In the last couple of years, we've decided to be far more strategic in the way we approach consoles. We've very confident that the games we're going to bring to consoles are going to be extremely high quality. *Starfighter* is getting great reviews and selling well.

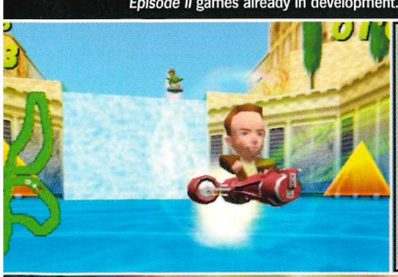
The last time we spoke (see *OPS2* #01), you said that going forward, LucasArts wouldn't be making *Star Wars* games taken directly from the movie but rather ones likes *Starfighter* – games that are 'inspired' by events and characters.
That's the conclusion we came to after listening to our fans and to *Star Wars* gamers in general. Believe it or not, LucasArts has a pretty active fanbase – there's not many game companies that can say that – who look out for every release we do and give us very vocal feedback. One of the lessons learned from *Episode I* is that *Star Wars* fans are looking to see depth and the stories George tells expanded on it what we do. They're excited by what George does in the movie world – a few key characters, locations, events, vehicles. But they want to see these things taken out of that world and fleshed out by interactive means – ie games. Going forward, what we're not doing is the 'game of the movie' or the 'game of a particular story within the movie' or movies. What we're looking to do is identifying set pieces and characters who we know are popular with *Star Wars* fans and building their story outwards.

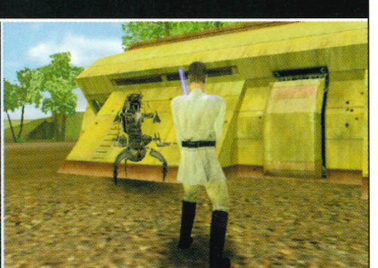
One of the next *Star Wars* games to come from LucasArts is the *MMORPG* (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game) hosted by Sony Online Entertainment, *Star Wars Galaxies* (www.starwarsgalaxies.com). Is this a one-off deal?
Right now, all we're able to say is that we have a product in development that is being coded by Verant, that in the US marketplace Sony Online will be hosting via The Station (www.station.sony.com) but we are exploring a whole bunch of opportunities that are there for us. Massively online multiplayer is absolutely going to be a big part of our business going forward. We're not about to sit back and see one of the biggest investments the computer gaming industry has ever made in *Star Wars Galaxies* just be a one-off.

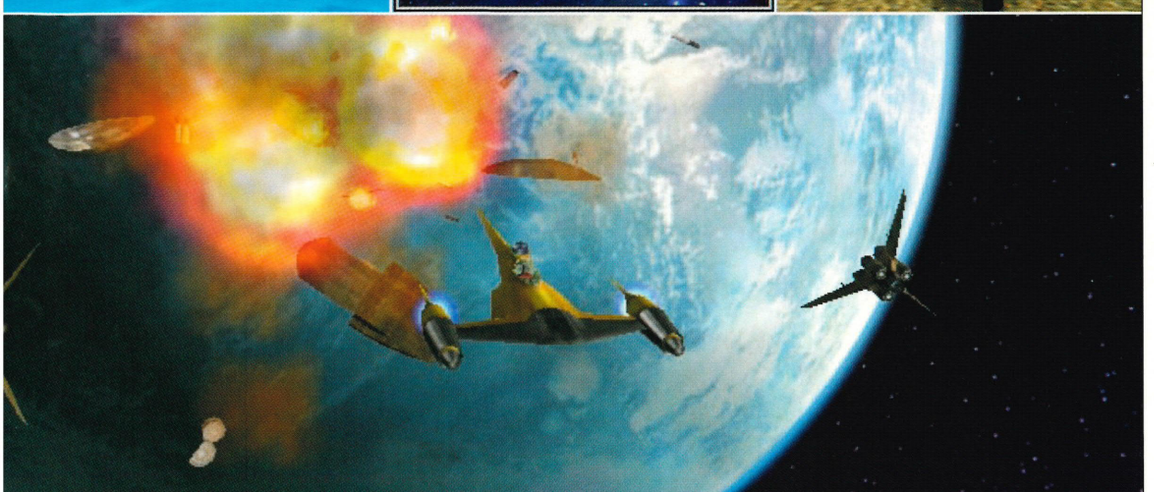
Will *Star Wars Galaxies* be platform-specific? With an eye on the announcement of the PS2 Hard Disk Drive, can you see *Galaxies* being like

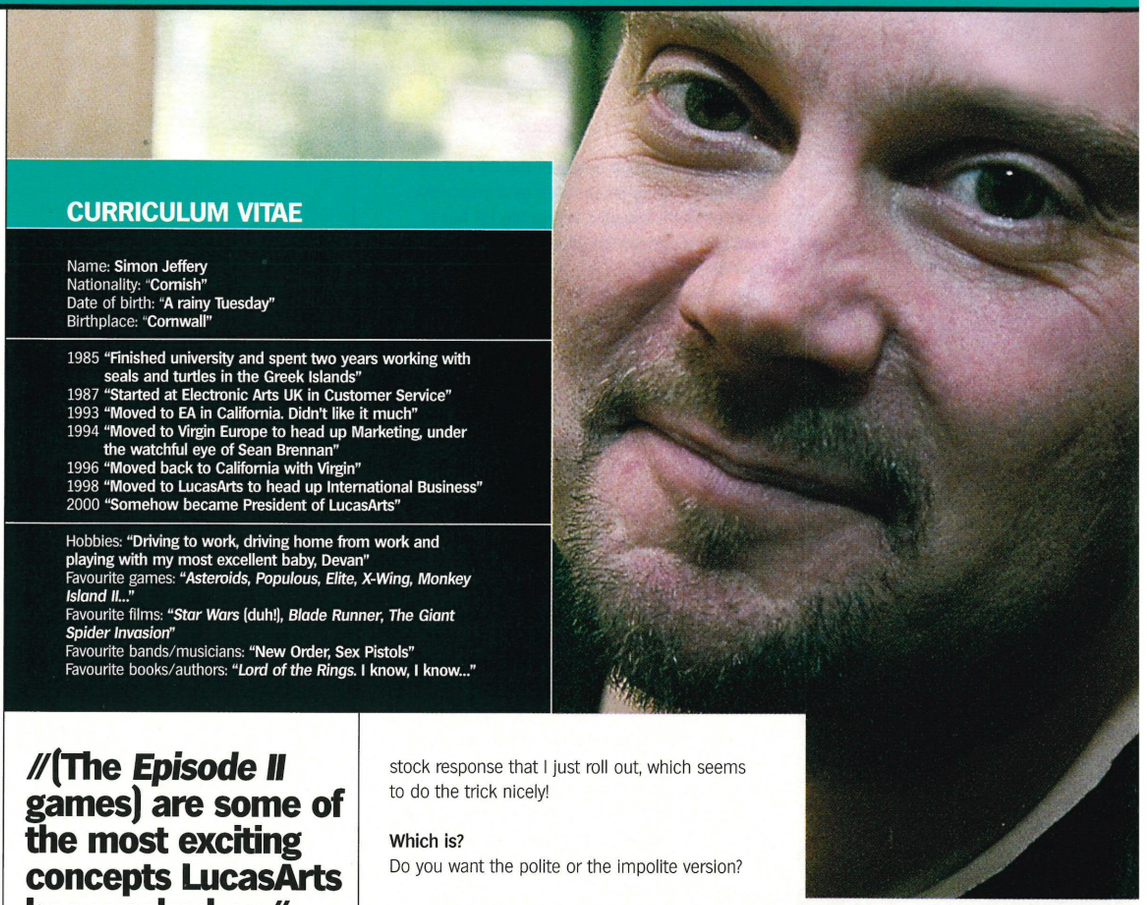
AND THE LEGEND LIVES ON

Like *Star Wars*? Then you'll love the future that LucasArts has planned for PlayStation 2 and your favourite movie. Reading clockwise from the top left, *Star Wars* is set to burst into the worlds of kart racing, online role-playing, third-person adventuring and probably more space-combat thanks to *Super Bombad Racing*, *Star Wars Galaxies*, *Obi-Wan* (hopefully) plus an inevitable sequel to *Star Wars: Starfighter*. While PC heads will be happy at the slim chance of *X-Wing* making it to the PS2, new fans will be far more interested in the two *Episode II* games already in development. More news as soon as we get it...









Final Fantasy XI where it's planned for PC users to be able to play and interact with PS2 gamers in an online world?
We see *Star Wars Galaxies* as basically being an umbrella brand – there will be different components of *Star Wars Galaxies* that people on different systems can get in and play with each other. So, yeah.

You've been sceptical of broadband in the past, believing most people aren't going to be hooked up until at least 2003-4.
Most of the discussions we have internally here about games are about 2003-2004! We're very aggressively building for our future right now. It's extremely unlikely that broadband will be a viable play mechanism for consoles before that time-frame, apart from small geographical pockets like California, certain parts of the East Coast, Japan and possibly dots of the UK and Germany. It's going to be a long, long time until broadband is here, however our investment in these future products is absolutely massive. These aren't games that take just 24 months to build. In order for us to be ready, we're making these investments now.

You've said you want LucasArts' output to be 50% *Star Wars* and 50% original games.
Absolutely. In fact, we had an internal review just last Friday and by 2002, we are on course to be in that position. I'm very, very happy about that.

Are you planning PS2 versions of any of the classic *Star Wars* games on the PC, *X-Wing* or *Jedi Knight*?
We're looking at building some new franchises. *Starfighter* could be one we'd look at.

The games you're now releasing for PC and PS2 have the sophistication that games only previously hinted at...
I think one of the things which we all need to remember is that after *Episode III*, there are no more *Star Wars* movies. Ever. The millions of people around the world who love the involvement and immersion in the *Star Wars* universe are actually going to place even more importance and reliance on the games to provide the kind of expansion we were talking about earlier. There won't be any more movies! A lot of people are hopeful that George will make another trilogy but he has gone on record as saying that no – after *Episode III*, that's it! The arc is completed and there you go. So we, going forward as LucasArts, will not just have to reinvent ourselves but to some extent even reinvent *Star Wars* and expand that out, as we're beginning to do that now in a number of different areas.

When we spoke last August, you said that instead of making an *Episode II* game, you'd be working on two to three new concepts based around the film.
We know what we're going to do, but I can't tell you! We know what we're doing, we're well under way and we're very happy with what we're doing. In fact, I think it's some of the most exciting concepts this company has ever worked on.

You read the final *Episode II* script last August. How many times a day do people ask you what it's about?
It depends what day it is! Far, far, far, too many – but it's like water off a duck's back now. I have my stock response that I just roll out, which seems to do the trick nicely!

Which is?
Do you want the polite or the impolite version?

It must be weird being both a *Star Wars* fan and President of LucasArts. Can you believe it?
I do it all the time. It's still a dream come true. I'm a gamer, a game obsessive and I'm a huge *Star Wars* fan. I've now seen the first *Star Wars* movie 94 times so far this year, so I'll probably hit the century. I haven't seen the others as much, but I've seen them a lot. There are people here who just amaze me though. I think I know a lot about *Star Wars?* There are people here who've seen the movies hundreds and hundreds of times and know every line of dialogue, every ancillary character's name. The depth of emotion that *Star Wars* provokes is just staggering sometimes.

I take it you've got a bootleg of the *Holiday Special?*
I don't like to talk about the *Holiday Special.*

I've got a final sentence written down. You're a 'suit' that loves games: discuss.
But I don't wear a suit... □

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: **Simon Jeffery**
Nationality: **"Cornish"**
Date of birth: **"A rainy Tuesday"**
Birthplace: **"Cornwall"**

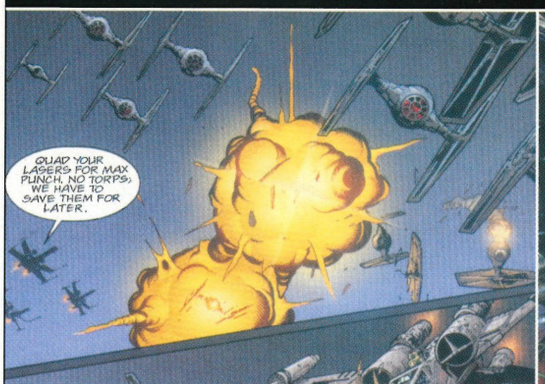
1985 **"Finished university and spent two years working with seals and turtles in the Greek Islands"**
1987 **"Started at Electronic Arts UK in Customer Service"**
1993 **"Moved to EA in California. Didn't like it much"**
1994 **"Moved to Virgin Europe to head up Marketing, under the watchful eye of Sean Brennan"**
1996 **"Moved back to California with Virgin"**
1998 **"Moved to LucasArts to head up International Business"**
2000 **"Somehow became President of LucasArts"**

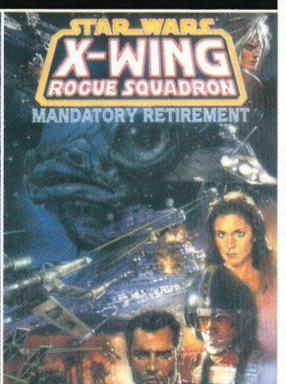
Hobbies: **"Driving to work, driving home from work and playing with my most excellent baby, Devan"**
Favourite games: **"*Asteroids, Populous, Elite, X-Wing, Monkey Island II*..."**
Favourite films: **"*Star Wars* (duh!), *Blade Runner, The Giant Spider Invasion*"**
Favourite bands/musicians: **"New Order, Sex Pistols"**
Favourite books/authors: **"*Lord of the Rings.* I know, I know..."**

//(The *Episode II* games) are some of the most exciting concepts LucasArts has worked on//

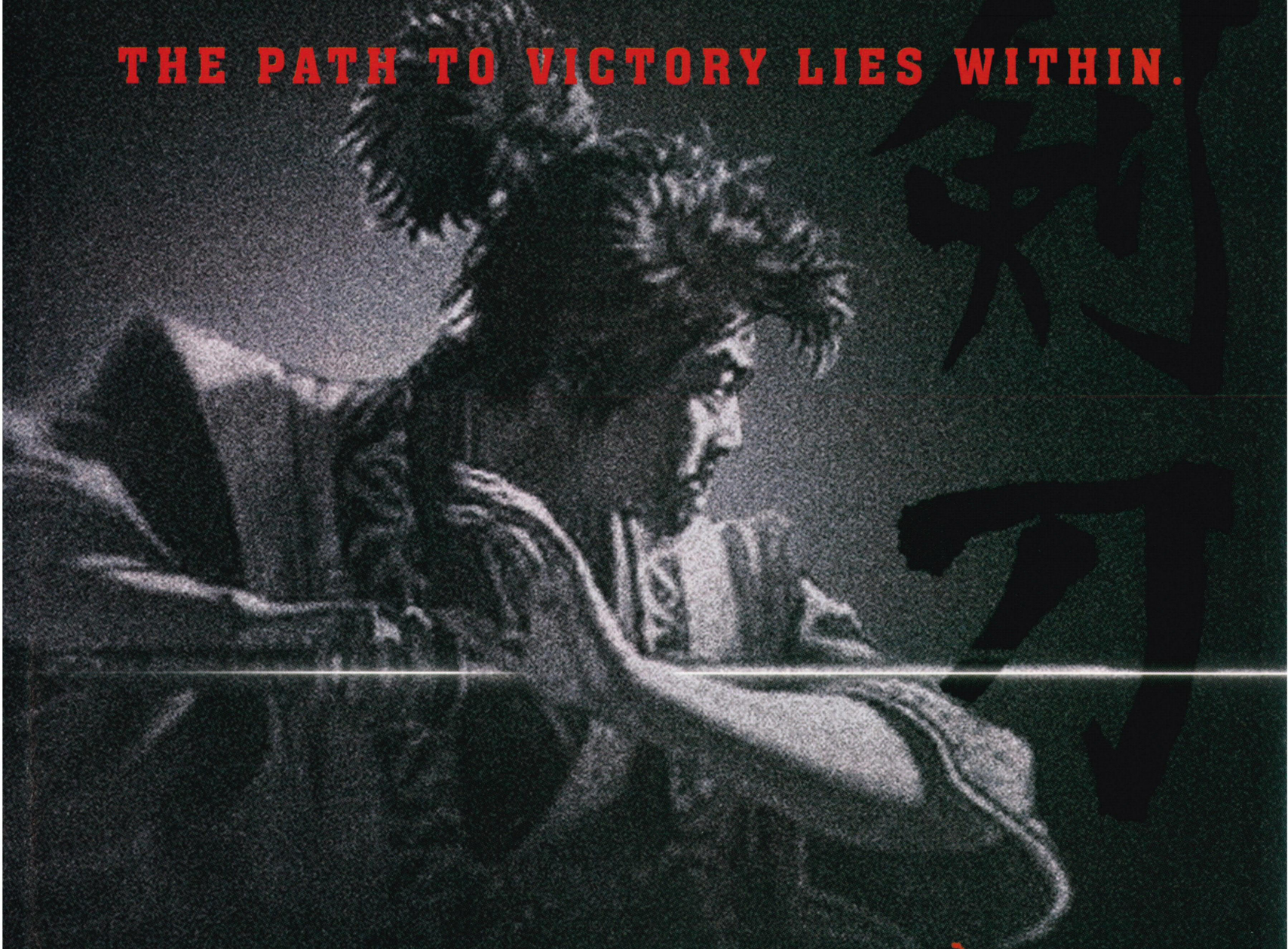
IT'S IN THE GAME

While previous *Star Wars* games have been inspired by the movies and comics, Jeffery sees his new batch of games as being so good, it'll soon be the other way around. According to Mr LucasArts: "Some of the stories we're designing for our future games are so strong that Lucas Licensing are coming to us and saying, 'Hey, this is great. We'd like to take this out to the comics and book guys and see what they could do with it.' *Rogue Squadron* was a Dark Horse comic and a few novels originally. The strength of our current stories means you'll be seeing things go the other way."





THE PATH TO VICTORY LIES WITHIN.



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Is there life on Mars? Not after you're finished with Volition's *Red Faction* – only with *OPS2*.

next month
in the june issue of

PlayStation.2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

RED FACTION

WALK THROUGH WALLS! DIG THROUGH FLOORS! SHOOT THINGS! NEXT MONTH, OPS2 BRINGS YOU THE WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW OF VOLITION'S GROUND-BREAKING FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

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OPS2 GOES TO HELL AND BACK WITH **DEVIL MAY CRY**

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headliners

Incoming! SCEE's *Dropship* ——— p47
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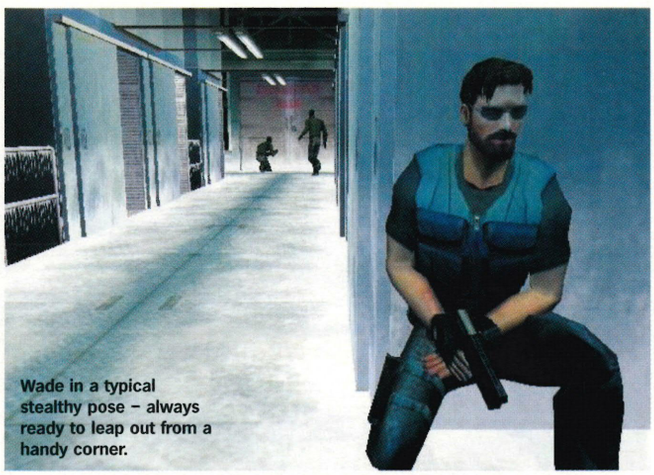
And a car with a PS2 in it ——— p66

More facial hair than Solid Snake, but no mullet... Jack Wade, star of forthcoming *Headhunter*.

TO BE THIS GOOD TAKES...

Headhunter, *F355 Challenge* and *Ecco The Dolphin* lead Sega's campaign for PS2.



Wade in a typical stealthy pose – always ready to leap out from a handy corner.

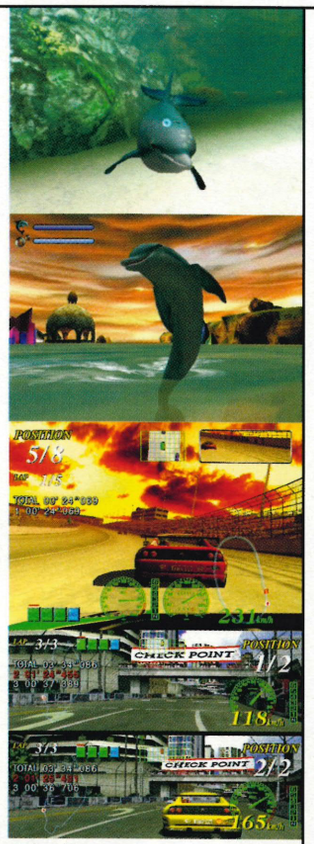
BACK IN JANUARY there was a seismic shock in the videogame industry akin to Godzilla stomping into your local town centre and eating your Gran as she shops for mint imperials. In this case, the shock was the startling news that Sega was bailing out of hardware manufacturing, and the tasty mint imperials came in the form of Sega games being developed for PlayStation 2.

The latest in Sega's seminal beat-'em-up series, *Virtua Fighter 4* was confirmed as a PS2 exclusive, as was the funkadelic dance-'em-up *Space Channel 5* starring the galaxy's sexiest news reporter, Ulala. And after months of whispering on the grapevine, Acclaim verified that it also had the license to convert *18 Wheeler*, *Zombie Revenge* and the fantastic *Crazy Taxi*. (See page 96 for the world exclusive PS2 review of *Crazy Taxi*).

But now for the big news scoop. As *OPS2* goes to press, Sega can't provide any official confirmation, but reliable sources have confirmed what the next batch of Sega games on PlayStation 2 will be for 2001. The real blockbuster of the bunch is *Headhunter*. Coming courtesy of Swedish studio, Amuze, and yet to see a Dreamcast release, *Headhunter* is one of the most talked about games in development anywhere in the world.

A third-person adventure in the vein of *Metal Gear Solid*, you take the role of hard-boiled action man Jack Wade in his quest to discover the truth behind sinister events on the mean streets of near-future California. An oppressive, reactionary government has assumed power and its response to the soaring crime rate is to force criminals to pay for their crimes – quite literally. But rather than being

(Below and left) Sadly, only Dreamcast shots are available of *Headhunter* at present. We'll bring you PS2 shots ASAP.



Swim the seven seas with tuna-baiting *Ecco The Dolphin* (top) and then head to the streets with *F355 Challenge* (below).

monetary, their debt to society is paid through compulsory organ donations which are used to prolong the lives of the rich.

At the forefront of the war against crime is the government's hardcore Anti-Crime Network, an elite group of 'headhunters' wiping out villains wherever they hide. When the leader of this organisation is assassinated, ex-ACN operative and now freelance bounty hunter, Wade is called upon to investigate the murder and its links to illegal trading in body parts.

An unashamedly cinematic adventure full of kinetic shoot-outs and thrilling motorbike chases, *Headhunter* is reminiscent of the work of Paul Verhoeven with its satirical examination of a violent, fascistic society – it even has tongue-in-cheek newsflashes interspersing the action, reminiscent of *Robocop*. Due out on Dreamcast in September and PS2 soon after, *Headhunter* is the only action/adventure on the horizon that could even begin to challenge the mighty *Metal Gear Solid 2*.

The two other Sega titles confirmed by our sources for PS2 are Yu Suzuki's racing masterpiece, *F355 Challenge* and the latest in Appaloosa's underwater saga, *Ecco The Dolphin: Defender of the Future*. Both are expected to arrive before Christmas.

//*Headhunter* is the only game on the horizon that could challenge *MGS2*//

Developed by Sega's resident genius – and extreme Ferrari enthusiast – Yu Suzuki, *F355 Challenge* is the most realistic driving simulation available for the Dreamcast. Originally a revolutionary coin-up featuring three screens and a post-race print-out of your performance stats, the game received an arcade-perfect Dreamcast conversion in 2000 with the added bonus of five extra tracks – and it's this version that will likely be ported across to PlayStation 2. Both incredibly fast and outrageously difficult, *F355* is as authentic an experience of driving a Ferrari as most of us are likely to get and will be a valued addition to PS2's racing stable.

Ecco The Dolphin: Defender of the Future isn't quite of the triple A standard of *F355* but it's an engrossing aquatic adventure nonetheless. Continuing Ecco's karmic quest to bring harmony to the planet, this time the bottle-nosed hippy has to travel through time to prevent the ecologically calamitous invasion of evil alien race, The Foe. Despite the beautifully animated dolphin and visually spectacular underwater worlds for him to explore, *Defender of the Future* proved a bit too passive and non-linear for many gamers – its lack of action and cryptic objectives lessening the impact of an otherwise impressive game. But with a few tweaks here and there, *Ecco* could find a much wider audience on the PS2.

Hopefully, these three new arrivals will just be the tip of the iceberg regarding Sega games on PlayStation 2. Rumours are constantly leaking in our direction of further conversions (most of them involving a certain blue hedgehog), and while our fingers are firmly crossed for the superlative likes of *Jet Set Radio* and *Virtua Tennis*, there's no concrete information as of yet. More soon! ☐ **LH**

METROSEXUALITY

Please Lord, let the rumours be true – is *MSR* making the leap to PS2?

If any driving game can be described as sex on wheels it's Bizarre Creations' Dreamcast classic, *Metropolis Street Racer*. Released last year to massive acclaim, *MSR* is an incredibly playable and hugely innovative spin on the usual driving formula. And the great news is, a PS2 conversion is now being 'strongly rumoured' from various sources.

Using hours of video footage, Bizarre recreated 1.5 square mile sections of London, San Francisco and Tokyo for the game, resulting in around 250 circuits comprised of different areas of these cities. Racing is based around a gigantic single-player game consisting of 25 chapters each with ten challenges – varying from full on street races against five other cars, to timed runs where it's just you against the clock. But what really makes *MSR* stand out from the crowd is the fact that, as the game's advertising proclaimed, "It's not how fast you drive, it's how you drive fast." Kudos points are awarded for your driving talent and deducted if you crash or glance other vehicles.

With *MSR* it's no longer enough just to finish in the first three, here you have to do it in *style* – and style is something *Metropolis Street Racer* has by the bucketload. Our advice? Get down on your knees and pray for a PS2 version of this baby. ☐

It's like *The Getaway* never happened... *MSR* is here (maybe).

"Ladeez and gentlemen, we will be cruisng at 500,000 feet and then dropping like a stone..."

EARTH NEEDS YOU!

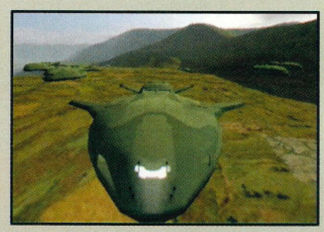
Keeping the peace in the futuristic fly/drive action game *Dropship*.

IT'S BEEN OVER six months since gamers had their first look at SCEE's ambitious new title, which was then little more than an impressive technical demo. Developer Studio Camden has now given *OPS2* exclusive access to what has become one of the PlayStation 2's most original and exciting 3D blasters so far scheduled for release.

Dropship isn't, as many people have referred to it in the past, a real-time strategy game – far from it. The game is a full-on visceral slice of dogfighting, tank-driving and all-out warfare spread across numerous global locations as far afield as Colombia and Kazakhstan. "We originally started using the word strategy because we wanted to describe it as a melding of flight sim, strategy game and action," says the game's Producer, Pete Edward. "But then as soon as you do that, people say 'Ah, it's an RTS'."

Set fifty years in the future, players are part of the United Peacekeeping Force, an organisation set up to combat threats to the world from drugs cartels and other more sinister powers. At your disposal is a range of highly manoeuvrable dropships which are used to complete story-based missions by destroying enemy units, rescuing hostages and deploying vehicles on the ground that players can then take for a spin. "There's a large variety of cool craft and visually there are things that gamers want to play with," says the studio's Communications Manager, Jason Fitzgerald. "Who doesn't want to drive a tank around and blow shit up?" Fair point.

Graphically the game looks stunning, with photo-realistic terrain stretching over 240km into the distance, gorgeous fully-animated 3D craft that send missiles slamming into buildings and wild explosions curling black smoke out of twisted wreckage – all at a silky 60fps with absolutely no slow-down whatsoever. *Dropship* is an incredibly mouth-watering prospect – don't miss next month's *OPS2* for the full story on Studio Camden and its battle-hardened tour de force. ☐ **JS**



***Dropship* will give you the opportunity to pilot vehicles and "blow shit up."**

BLUE LINES

Mythos Games' *Dreamland Chronicles: Freedom Ridge* has been canned due to a lack of publisher funds ›› Activision have purchased the videogame rights to Sam '*Evil Dead*' Raimi's upcoming *Spider-Man* film. The Neversoft-produced sequel to the PSone hit is expected next year ›› Atlus is working on a 3D first-person RPG adventure for PS2 predictably entitled *Wizardry*

"Hang on a minute, I'll just answer my mobil-ARRRRGH!"

ROAD RAGE

Midway brings the arcade thrills of *CART Fury* to PlayStation 2.

REALISTIC RACERS, SUCH AS those based on Formula One licenses, can often seem a little 'dry' compared with the thrills 'n' spills of stunt-filled action games like EA's *SSX*. Midway's exciting new PS2 title should put an end to that – *CART Fury* is a tyre-shredding, super-fast racer that's an absolute blast to play.

Adapted straight from Midway's recent arcade cabinet, *CART Fury* is an officially licensed title with F1-style cars, ten champion drivers and 18 very different tracks, made up of eight authentic world locations and ten fantasy courses that include an Alpine raceway and a construction site. "This is the fastest, smoothest racing game yet for the PS2," says Lead Programmer Matt Booty. "It's immediately evident how much our game screams after playing other games that are out."

In Arcade mode, *CART Fury* is rooted in the original coin-op, with the exaggerated car physics and intelligent computer-controlled opposition providing plenty of bumps, scrapes and crashes, while insane power-ups such as 'on fire' boosts, big air jumps and rocket wheels enhance the turbocharged capers. However, there's also a realistic Simulator mode for those players wanting to adjust car set-ups – tyre pressure, wing angle and so on – before taking their vehicle for a spin through *CART Fury*'s photo-realistic courses. "We took over 5,000 reference photos of real tracks in the game, such as Houston, to make the 3D models," continues Booty. "We've had emails from people saying 'I played your game and saw my office!' That's how accurate the scenery is."

Midway is also planning a two-player split-screen mode and numerous mini-games for squeezing every drop of enjoyment out of this massively playable racer. *CART Fury* is scheduled for release in September. ☐ **JS**

**For news on why this could be one of the last of Midway's coin-op conversions, see page 61*

SPY

LIST

Five sky scraping games determined to take you into the mile high club.

›› Medal Of Honor: Fighter Command
The *Medal of Honor* team bring their WWII expertise to the skies. Pacific-based missions will involve rescuing sailors bobbing in shark infested waters and plunging headlong into the heat of battle above the skies of Pearl Harbour. See page 62 for more details of this and *Frontline*.
Mach: 5

›› Wing Over III
Forget combat planes and jet fighters, here you'll be able to take to the skies in jumbos and cargo planes, pull stunts in biplanes, try your hand at vintage craft, serve gin and tonics in small plastic cups before blissfully soaring into the sunset over the horizon. Dads will love it, not sure about the kids.
Mach: 2

›› Ace Combat 4
Now subtitled *Shattered Skies*, Namco promise supersonic combat aircraft blasting the bejabbers out of each other over ultra realistic landscapes in battle simulations that would leave even the most avid plane spotter totally bedazzled. We want this game and we want it yesterday.
Mach: 4

›› Dropship
Dogfighting in the air and tank blasting on the ground in this futuristic game from SCEE. Inspired by the massive military landing craft in *Aliens* you'll be atmosphere hopping, destroying enemies and hurtling through the skies like a demented iron bird with a headache. We could be looking at a future classic.
Mach: 4

›› Thunderhawk 3
Core's helicopter sim makes a return and packs in more of a punch than before. Greater mission depth and stunning looking visuals (with the little help from some sky-scorching weaponry) could make this a serious contender to the two-winged variety of flight sim. Expect more news next issue.
Mach: 3

Five games that will have you crashing back to Earth.

Army Men: Air Attack 2
What do you mean, a forthcoming sequel to a PSone *Army Men* game and you predict it's not much cop?

Sky Surfer
Falling through clouds performing tricks sounds fun. This isn't.

Gradius III & IV
Played a blinder in the Eighties, looks blind drunk in the Noughties.

Robot Warlords
Apparently there's a plane on level two. Chances are you won't stick around to find out.

Space Ace
Spaceships galore but no chance to fly them. Gits.

SPY

SPELLBINDING

D&D-inspired hack 'n' slash with *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance.*

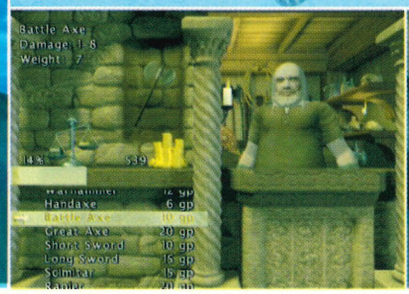
WE'VE NOT BEEN wildly impressed with the RPG fodder that's headed our way recently (see the, um, dubious *Warriors Of Might And Magic*, reviewed on page 119) but the future looks suitably free of thorns as gamers are soon to be provided far superior goblin fodder with the sublime fantasy *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance.*

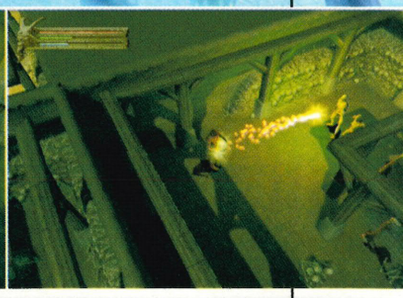
Developed by Snowblind Studios for Black Isle Studios – the RPG wing of Interplay – this third-person action adventure is already shaping up to be the best yet of the popular series. Featuring a choice of three characters – barbarian, mage or dwarf – players embark on a journey that takes in dark zombie-infested dungeons, detailed medieval city courtyards teeming with Ray Harryhausen-style skeletons and icy wastes honoured by the presence of roaming abominable snowmen. Each of the three playable characters has different skills, weaknesses and heavy metal weaponry, plus the use of various magic spells that dish out vengeance in a wizard-stylee. With still no plans for multiplayer options like Midway's *Gauntlet: Dark Legacy*, the single-player experience appears much more rewarding, packed with oodles of monsters, traps, puzzles, potions, swords, sorcery and the usual erudite conversations of NPCs.

BGDA also has some of the most impressive graphical whizz-bangs on PlayStation 2 – Snowblind's engine showing off realistic flickering fire effects, ultra-realistic rippling water, sparkling spells, destructible scenery and detailed character animation, all delivered effortlessly to the screen at 60fps. RPGs aren't usually the stuff of fevered videogame conversations among console users, but this dark tail of undead gothic adventuring looks destined to open up these involving adventures to a much wider audience on its release in September. More soon. ☐ **JS**

**Have a butchers at OPS2's beautiful RPG game on page 64.*

Left: *Dark Alliance* features some of the most realistic water effects ever seen.





BLUE LINES

Sega's *Space Channel 5* will have extra features on its PS2 DVD release, including more music and a two-player mode ›› Jester Interactive is to release a game next year based on the Isle of Man TT motorcycle race ›› Hauppauge has developed a TV card for PCs, WinTV-PVR, that allows PS2 owners to play their machine through a hi-res monitor ›› A PS2 videogame based on the insect-exploits in the *Antz* movie is crawling towards PS2 courtesy of Empire ›› *Twisted Metal Black* is now confirmed for a UK release from SCEE

'SEARCH FOR A STAR' ONI COMPETITION WINNER

The votes are in, as the real-life Konoko is decided by you!

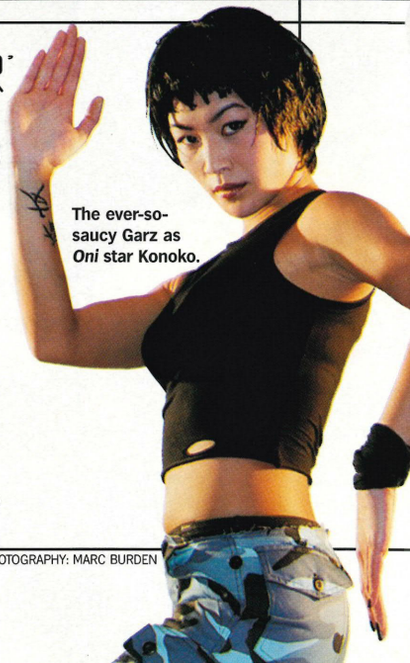
THE LAST MONTH or so has been a hot bed of excitement in the *OPS2* office over issue #05's tightly fought 'Choose your Konoko' competition. We all had our own personal favourites to, er, root for, but it was down to you to decide. At one point it looked like the tattooed belly-buttoned Sallyia might have stolen it, but the final result after all the entries had been counted was the gorgeous 'plum sauce squirting' Garz. ☐

THE FINAL SCORES

Garz.....36%
Sallyia.....33%
Sophie.....17%
Zoe.....14%

AND THE WINNER IS...

The person with the eye for a face that fits not only walks away with the satisfaction of picking the right girl – they also get some big ol' prizes too. So a PlayStation 2, a copy of *Oni* and an *Oni* T-shirt goes to Paul Shotton of Stoke-on-Trent. Well done Paul. Thanks to the hundreds of you who sent in your votes.



The ever-so-saucy Garz as *Oni* star Konoko.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARC BURDEN

As these exclusive screens show, Deadside has been completely overhauled for PS2.

Shadow Man can call upon a wicked collection of voodoo spells.

DARK ANGEL

Battles against the rampant forces of darkness in *Shadow Man: 2econd Coming.*

"FOLLOWING ON FROM the news report in issue #05, *OPS2* brings you the latest on Acclaim's unsettling demon-destroying PS2 adventure *Shadow Man: 2econd Coming*. The sequel again features Mike LeRoi, who treads a fine line between the real and the dead worlds where he stalks evil in the form of a hideous alter ego, Shadow Man. Both forms have different skills and weaknesses for puzzle-solving and combat – Shadow Man can use voodoo, swim or fall any distance, whereas Mike has superior combat strength and can move heavy objects.

In this new adventure, LeRoi sets out to rescue the kidnapped Jaunty – a repellent Irish dwarf and gatekeeper in Deadside – but soon learns of a terrifying conspiracy to bring about an Apocalypse of Bibilical proportions.

"The basic quest is themed throughout the game," says Senior Producer Nick Bagley. "In Louisiana there's the stealthy disposal of dead or stunned enemies in handy alligator infested pools and a tense stalk-and-slash encounter through the frozen forests of Russia, with enemies tracking your snowy footprints as you go."

Luckily, Mike has access to a huge range of weaponry including an assassin's pistol for stealth kills and a large scale machine-gun with optional grenade launcher. He'll need it with monsters such as the Deadworm inhabiting the game. "These creatures live within the very Deadside landscape. They're man-sized blind maggots or lampreys that attack their prey after bursting through 'sores' in the ground," continues Bagley. "The Deadworm attacks by latching leech-like, onto Mike to gnaw his flesh, or rearing up to spit a projectile of glutinous acid-snot."

Acclaim's Studio Teeside is proud of the horrendous visuals, if they don't give players nightmares, then the creepy soundtrack in Dolby Digital 5.1 will. Expect spines to shiver when *Shadow Man: 2econd Coming* rises from the grave this August. □ **JS**

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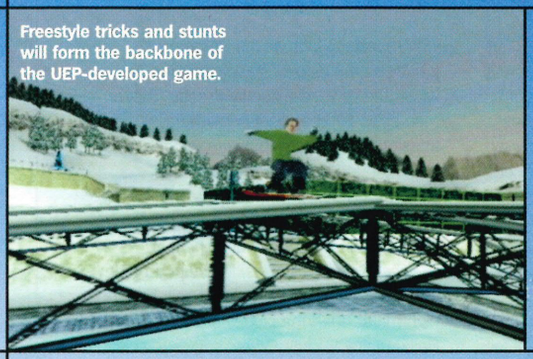
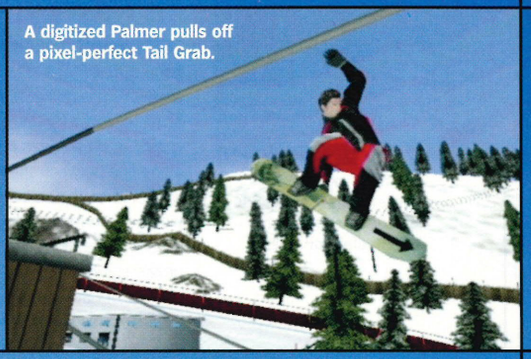
Some say 'rad, some say 'cool', we say 'nutter': Mr Shaun Palmer.



Freestyle tricks and stunts will form the backbone of the UEP-developed game.

//All the *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* kids will be able to pick this up and already know how to play it...//



A digitized Palmer pulls off a pixel-perfect Tail Grab.

ICE MAN

OPS2 rides the white fantastic with *Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder.*

THE TONY HAWK'S *Pro Skateboarding* franchise established Activision as *the* games publisher for extreme sports. Now it plans to bring its celebrity endorsed board, bike and deck titles to PlayStation 2 courtesy of their new dedicated offshoot label, O2. *OPS2* was invited to the beautiful Squaw Valley resort in Lake Tahoe, California to meet the latest star of one of the imprints forthcoming PS2 releases: the snowboarder, Cadillac-fan and all-round athlete, Shaun Palmer. "It's bizarre. I never thought that it would come to having my own videogame," says the six time X-Games gold medallist. "With snowboarding I just made a living out of it as a kid, so I just kept following that path because it was a good life."

Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder is being developed by UEP Systems in Japan, who has already enjoyed critical and commercial success with their work on the *Cool Boarders* franchise for SCEE. The game features spectacular locations around the world, including courses from France and the USA, that have been personally chosen by Palmer, plus nine other snowboarding professionals. Producer of the game for Activision, Michael Fletcher, is convinced this will be the most impressive snowboarding title yet seen on PlayStation 2. "We want to combine the race element that Palmer's famous for with the freestyle trick element associated with the other riders," he explains.

Fletcher and his team have been working closely with UEP to make sure that the game has the easy pick-up-and-play feel of the Neversoft *Tony Hawk* games. "However, we don't want to just rip *Tony Hawk* off," he adds. "We'll have a Palmer-specific control interface. But all those kids out there who play *Pro Skater* will pick up this game and know how to play it already."

From the impressive appearance of these exclusive screenshots, *SPPS* could be the game to knock the more fantasy-based EA Sports' *SSX* off its snowy peak. But what does Palmer think about the prospect of a self-titled PlayStation 2 snowboarding game coming out this winter?

"You know, when I was a little kid I played *Asteroids*. You put a coin in the machine and when you were playing, it was like, you actually looked up to that videogame. I want kids to play *Pro Snowboarder* and be excited – that's the whole point of making the game." □ **JS**

**Check out next month for a full exclusive report from Shaun Palmer in Squaw Valley plus Activision's complete O2 line-up.*

BIG AIR

Activision's new label – O2

Using the success of the *Tony Hawk's Skateboarding* titles as a springboard, Activision has launched an all new label for their extreme sports videogames – O2. "It's a label that's core to the sport," says Director of Global Brand Management, William Kassoy. "All these sports are about getting big air and big tricks. That's what this brand is going to represent. But it's the authenticity that is going to differentiate our games from our competitor's titles." Kassoy revealed Activision is developing no less than ten titles for release between Christmas this year and Christmas 2002. Expect gravity-defying PS2 outings for BMX bandit Mat Hoffman, surfer hunk Kelly Slater, padded-up skateboarder par excellence Tony Hawk plus a brand new franchise to be revealed only in next month's *OPS2*.

***LMA Manager 2002* will satisfy the Statto in every fan with heaps of facts and figures.**

IN A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN

Could you do better than George Graham? Find out with *LMA Manager 2002*.

WHO'D BE A FOOTBALL MANAGER? Turbulent boardrooms, tabloid intrusion, errant players, disastrous league runs – and that's just teams in the Screwfix League. Well, Codemasters is giving PS2 owners and wannabe David O'Learys a chance to test out their trusted formations and wild football strategies in *LMA Manager 2002*.

The PSone series has already been a big success, carving a huge niche for itself as the premier football management game on the console, but the PS2 version has taken the concept much further. All the major European leagues including England, Spain, Germany and Italy have been incorporated into the game, plus vastly improved AI and after match analysis.

"We're continuing *LMA Manager*'s quest for the ultimate match where you can make your decisions on the team and players based on how well or how badly they are playing," says Producer Simon Prytherch talking exclusively to *OPS2*. "This makes it much more like being a real football manager. You never see a manager sitting in the dugout looking at a spreadsheet trying to work out how his players are performing."

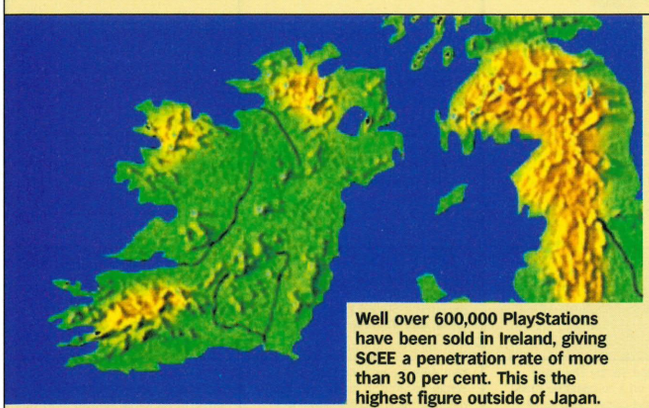
During a match, *LMA Manager 2002* will allow you to see all of the goals again in a full 3D action replay and after the game, the familiar Scottish brogue of none other than Alan Hansen will take you through every major event, slowing the action down and analysing both teams' performances. Also, Prytherch and the team are trying to ensure that the often-annoying loading times of the original PSone game won't reappear in this next-gen title. "We're making efficient use of PS2 memory, so for instance, you'll no longer experience long waits when you move forward in the calendar a few days, because the matches will be played a lot quicker."

With the PS2's advanced processing power allowing further treats such as realistic player animations, 32-man squads and a full international transfer market, *LMA Manager 2002* could answer the prayers of quite a few footie fanatics when the game is launched this winter. Sven-Goran Eriksson – watch your back... ☐ **JS**

NEWS OF THE WORLD

THIS MONTH: IRELAND

VIDEOGAMING ON A GLOBAL SCALE



Well over 600,000 PlayStations have been sold in Ireland, giving SCEE a penetration rate of more than 30 per cent. This is the highest figure outside of Japan.

On launch day Ireland sold out of its allocation of 20,000 PS2 units within hours of them going on sale but, since the start of the new year, there have been plenty of consoles available in stores. The biggest selling games in Ireland at the moment are *Oni*, *SSX*, *TimeSplitters* and *Tekken Tag Tournament*, and as is the case everywhere there's a lot of excitement over *MGS2* and *GT3: A-spec*. Biggest gripes are about the DVD/RGB situation, the noise of the built-in fan the lack of original titles – and the price of a pint. ☐ **KEVIN MACDERMOT**

Top 10 Irish PS2 games

1. Oni
2. SSX
3. TimeSplitters
4. Tekken Tag Tournament
5. Knockout Kings 2001
6. Moto GP
7. FIFA 2001
8. Ridge Racer V
9. Dead Or Alive 2
10. Smuggler's Run

Chart source: Official Irish Playstation 2 Magazine (22/03/01)

FIVE MIND-BLOWING FACTS ABOUT IRELAND

1. St Patrick's Day was cancelled in Ireland this year because of the foot and mouth threat. It is yet to have been rescheduled.
2. More than 40 million Americans claim to be of Irish extraction and a recent survey in Britain found that, although 25 per cent of people in England claim Irish ancestry, only 10 per cent really do.
3. Ireland has a soccer league of its own and two national soccer teams (Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland). Both have made it to the quarter-finals of the World Cup in the last 20 years.
4. Ireland has won the Eurovision song contest more times than any other nation – seven in total – and had a hand in at least two non-Irish victories. Thank the devil Michael Flatley can't sing...
5. Ireland's biggest export to Britain is boy bands, including Boyzone and their pre-pubescent protegés Westlife. And B*Witched.

gallery

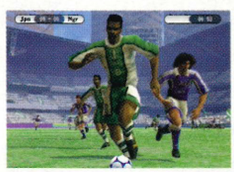
The latest screens from the latest games...

CONFLICT ZONE
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Release date: June

Involving new RTS war simulation based on NASA's actual AI technology. Players control a peace-keeping force or a shadowy organisation dedicated to bringing about global conflict.

CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX
Publisher: Havas/Universal
Release date: Autumn 2001

The mad marsupial leaps onto PS2 in a spectacular 3D adventure spread across distinct worlds themed around water, earth, wind and fire.



INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE SOCCER
Publisher: Eon
Release date: Christmas 2001

Released in Japan as *Greatest Striker*, Eon is bringing Taito's footie title to the UK. Includes an innovative World Ranking Mode for teams and players but the voice recognition is dropped.

CITY CRISIS
Publisher: TBC
Release date: TBC

Currently being developed by Syscom Entertainment in Japan, this exciting *Airwolf*-style helicopter action title has players rescuing hostages and catching criminals in a disaster-ridden urban death maze.

BLUE LINES

Resident Evil **is finally being brought to the big screen, starring Milla Jovovich (*The Fifth Element*) as a zombie-vanquishing STARS agent ›› Konami has the arcades in its sights with the imminent launch of sniper shoot-'em-up *Silent Scope 3*. Expect *Silent Scope 2* to head to PS2 next year ›› Codemasters' recent deal acquiring the license for the V8 Supercar Shell Championship, hints at the possibility of a next-gen *TOCA Touring Cars* for PS2... ›› Revolution's *Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon* has been announced for a PS2 release**

SPY

DEDICATED, INSEPARABLE, INVINCIBLE!

Cult kids TV classic *Battle of the Planets* comes to PS2.

BACK IN THE EIGHTIES when thin black leather piano ties were the height of fashion, a certain cartoon series enthralled schoolchildren with mesmerising visuals and action-packed story lines. *Battle of the Planets* was one of the first Japanese anime programmes to hit British TV screens and starred a bizarre group of characters belonging to G-Force, an organisation that bravely defended Earth from the evil domination plans of cross-dressing arch-criminal Zoltar.

Headfirst Productions (also working on *Simon The Sorcerer 3D* for the PC) has announced it is to develop a next-generation title based on the Filmation/Sandy Frank series featuring sumptuous cel-shaded cartoon graphics. "Outside of the retro value of *BotP*, the series lends itself perfectly to a single-player or multiplayer team-based action game," says Andrew Brazier from the development team at Headfirst. "It'll feature all of the characters with their own special powers, vehicles and weapons, acting as an individual or part of a team."

The playable characters are G-Force leader Mark, sarcastic hero Jason, ironically named fat slob Tiny, the beautiful Princess and the absolutely raving Keyop, although the caped, camp robot 7 Zark 7 and his canine comic sidekick 1 Rover 1 have yet to be confirmed as they weren't in the original series, known in Japan as *Science Ninja Gatchaman*. G-Force's spectacular powers included the unnerving ability to "Transmute!" into devastating fiery alter-egos complete with their rocket ship, the Phoenix.

Unfortunately, fans of the cult series may have a long wait for the PS2 incarnation – even as late as Christmas 2002. "We're only at a very early stage of development at the moment," says Brazier, "Headfirst is currently looking for a publisher, but there's already been a lot of enthusiasm about the project." In the meantime, gamers can catch the seminal series again on cult cable channel Bravo, or for true fans, splash out on the forthcoming DVD collection. ☐ **JS**

**Head for www.headfirst.co.uk for more information*

THE GRID #07: Which cartoons are ripe for PS2 high jinks?

	What's it all about?	What kind of game should it be?	And you'd be playing?	Likelihood of release?	Cash-in or Shoe-in?
Scooby Doo	Everybody's fave talking dog, stoner, cravat sporting jock, prom ditz and frumpy brainiac sleuthing quintet solve mysteries usually involving rubber frog costumes and some old fool named Johnson.	Time is ripe for a *Resident Scooby*-style survival horror title with Scooby and Shaggy doing most of the surviving as they search for the nearest stocked fridge.	All five! Although anyone actually wanting to uncover the fiendish plots would do well to play Velma, knee-high socks and those strangely attractive NHS specs notwithstanding.	Last year THQ bought the rights to make *Scooby Doo* games for the next three years. But their PSone title *Classic Capers* failed to set the world ablaze. For now the Mystery Machine is rusting in the garage.	There's definitely a place for a teeth-chattering fusion of comedy and terror. With a Hollywood movie in the works, it won't be long before PS2 gamers are screaming for Scooby Snacks again.
Battle of the Planets	Five unkempt youngsters with special powers (G-Force) fly around in a bloody great space ship/fire hazard (the Phoenix) protecting the Earth from the sexy pointy-faced Zoltar and his Spectra fellas. Magic.	With each member of G-Force boasting their own vehicle (Star Buggy and Galacticycle anyone?) and a ready source of pure evil to attack *BotP* is begging to be turned into a multi-vehicular-action-adventure.	Everyone will want to play Jason 'cause he's the rebel, but fatty Tiny *does* get to fly the Phoenix and eat tons of Space Burgers. Oh, and Princess knows how to handle a Yo-Yo in a tight situation	Headfirst Productions has just bought the rights to this fantastic anime series and is in the process of developing a rip-roaring, *ZOE*-bashing PS2 game. Transmute!	Cult retro appeal might push Jason and chums into the charts – see above for more details. Transmute! Again!
Dangermouse	He's the greatest. He's amazing! He's the best! The exploits of England's premier eye-patch wearing secret agent mouse are the stuff of cartoon legend, as are Penfold the hamster and the evil Baron Silas Greenback.	With Dangermouse's abundant humour, adult friendly wit and catchphrases ("Crikey DM!", "Shush Penfold.") this could be the franchise to save the 3D platform genre.	Dangermouse without a doubt, although being able to unlock a Baron Greenback mode and trying to thwart DM's progress would be ace.	Unlikely at the moment, but all it would take is a well placed series re-run and we'd be knee deep in titles faster than you can say, "Si, Barone."	Shoe-in. This is a franchise with hit game potential and DM could out suave 007 any day. Not bad for a half-blind rodent.
Wacky Races	Ten bizarre vehicles with the cream of weirdness at the wheel use every underhand tactic imaginable – and then some – to win well, frankly wacky races from the Dipsy Doodle Desert to the Zippy Mississippi.	A no brainer this one. A racer of course. *And* it's coming to PS2.	You'll be able to drive a handful of cars including Peter Perfect's Turbo Terrific and Penelope Pitstop's Pink Compact. Dastardly and Muttley fans will have to race like maniacs to unlock the Mean Machine.	Not just likely, but definite. *Wacky Races Starring Dastardly and Muttley* is due for release this June. See page 32 for more.	This was a biggy on the Dreamcast and the same developers have been busy adding new animations and a whole new city environment for the PS2 version. A kart racer with bags of character? Yes please.
The Simpsons	The everyday lives of a dysfunctional but close-knit family living in the shadow of a massive nuclear reactor with a taste for junk food and a grandpa who has no recollection of who he is or where is going.	Less *The Sims*, more *The Simpsons*. Teach Homer how to eat properly, take Marge to the hairdressers, prevent the reactor going critical and stop grandpa driving trucks into the Kwik-E-Mart.	Every one of them from Homer to Bumblebee man a la Virtual Springfield for the Mac/PC. You'd take on Springfield in all it's radioactive glory.	Unknown. *The Simpsons* have featured in many games over the years, the most recent being PSone's wretched *Simpsons Wrestling*. PS2 will do their antics the world of good.	Would you turn down the opportunity to control the lives of the most famous cartoon family in the history of cartoon families? Exactly.
Ren & Stimpy	Who the hell knows? A small irritable Mexican chihuahua and a brainless fat moggy live together indulging in all manner of half-witted attempts to out-disgust each other, get rich or embark on life-changing experiences.	Again, who the hell knows? It would probably be best suited to a platform-style game but would end up descending into chaos, with sub-games such as 'suck out Stimpy's belly button fluff' or 'Make zit souffle'.	Both Ren and Stimpy. The game would take on a co-operative mode much like the classic Sega game *Toejam & Earl*. You'd aid each other in your quest to find the long lost nose goblins or something.	Slim. After a promising start *Ren & Stimpy* became so off-the-wall that watching them was like downing a bottle of Absinthe and rolling around in a field of carpet samples. It was complete and utter nonsense.	What is there left to cash-in on? It was hardly a phenomenon. People would buy it if they wanted to relive a blip of cat/dog madness that haunted them for a nanosecond sometime in the mid-Nineties.
The Jungle Book	Mowgli and his furry chums galavant and cavort throughout the jungle dancing, singing and proving that the depths of deepest darkest India are just the sort of place Disney can pacify.	Well, it's on its way in the form of *The Jungle Book Rhythm 'n' Groove*. Mowgli and chums get all Bemani on us bopping away to all the tunes from Disney's classic film. You can even do it with a dance mat.	Any of *The Jungle Book* characters. Even Kaa the snake makes his dance debut in a series of coils and spring-like jumps. How does a snake dance?	Well we'll have a review of it next month so we'd say a release was looking like a strong possibility.	Far from a cash-in (the film was released during The Beatles' pop reign) the game is a brilliant excuse to dance along to some all-time classic songs. All together now, "Look for the bare necessities..."
Warner Brothers	The crazy antics of of Warner Bros' insane characters from the classic capers of Bugs, Daffy and Co to the newer characters such as Pinky and The Brain or The Goodfeathers (*The Sopranos* played out by pigeons.)	A beat-'em-up most definitely. Pit Sylvester against a frying pan wielding Tweety or Elma Fudd against Yosemite Sam to see just who is Bugs' worst enemy.	Every character you could think of. Apart from Foghorn Leghorn the terminally unfunny chicken who was better suited to a quick dip in a deep fat frier in our opinion.	You never know. Warner Bros games have been doing the round since the year dot so the likelihood of seeing them appear in one incarnation or another on PS2 is likely.	Warner Bros games have always hovered firmly in the middle ground. They've all been cash-ins but some (such as *Taz-Mania* on the Mega Drive) are classics of their time.

NICKELODEON

SPY in japan

Edited by **Amos Wong.**

HELLO KITTY

Bandai releases a feline counterpart to Sony's robopooch...

DESPERATELY WANT A ROBO-PET but balking at the cost of an AIBO II? In Japan at least, tech fetishists have another alternative that promises to be streets ahead of the lesser quasi-bots crowding shops. Costing around ¥50,000 (£292) which still isn't inexpensive, but hey, it's a third the cost of AIBO, Bandai's new BN-1 robo-cat can obey simple commands and even recognise their owners, thanks to an infrared ID tag worn by him (or her).

Looking like something out of that *Buck Rogers* TV series from the Elghties, it may not have the mechatronic edge of Sony's mutt, but the retro-styled plastic feline is mobile enough to somersault, play dead, climb certain obstacles and cat-box! Its big eyes give 250 patterns of expression, which probably includes 'pleasantly blissed out,' should you stroke its throat sensor. Boasting advanced AI (what else would they say?) it recognises gestures and will develop its own emotional responses the longer it interacts with people. A forthcoming wireless computer adapter will enable new functions to be downloaded via the Internet, or you could opt to take a dip into AI programming yourself, via a behaviour synthesizer. Or train it like the real thing. Nearly 2,500 units were offered exclusively online to Japanese residents only on 21 February, though punters will have to wait a month to get the goods.

Fuelled by exhibitions, massive press and a pop culture with more robot icons than you can poke a stick at, there's no signs of the robo-craze ending in the near future either. Rival manufacturer Tomy released their snappily named robot Dog.com recently and another litter of mechanical pet toys announced at a toy show are due to hit the streets. Why, it's a *Super Robot War* for real! Except the damage won't be collateral – it'll be to the enthusiast's bank account. ☐ **AW**

Meet BN-1: It doesn't need feeding, can't get fleas and won't pee in your cornflakes.

30 DAYS IN TOKYO

A MONTH IN THE LIFE OF *OPS2*'S MAN IN JAPAN, AMOS WONG

Day 3 Had a great time blasting vampires, getting slugged by boxers and bashing Japanese drums at the AOU arcade show. Sega's *Walk The Dog* took first prize for Inspiration only bested by the costumed girls that helped promote it. Love those ears.

Can we walk your dog please lady?

Day 5 Checked out the PS2 birthday bash on the sixth floor of Sony's Ginza showroom. *Extermination* dominated the demo units, but gyrating *Para Para Paradise* players proved the most amusing to watch, standing amongst the semicircle of motion sensors. Won't be caught dead playing that one then – in public anyway.

Day 11 *ZOE* was released a few days ago. Overcame the urge to nick a few of the fab posters by sheer willpower. And fear of a trip to the Akihabara police station.

Day 18 Blown away by the mesmerising trailer for Dreamcast's *Sakura Wars 3*. Here's hoping that the forthcoming PS2 release is just as good.

Day 18 Discovered the latest Japanese trend in wind up toys – elderly people exercising. For less than six pounds you can buy models of potbellied and tracksuited baldies huffing and puffing through a series of bead-inducing sit-ups and press-ups. Unfortunately I've yet to have been able to buy a set of my own.

Day 29 Toro saturation continues. The ubiquitous cat from PSone game *Doco Domo Isshou* stars in a promotional campaign for the unfortunately named Calpis Water (trust me, it tastes a lot better than it sounds). Peel off the little sticker, check the back and hopefully win a prize! And no, I didn't.

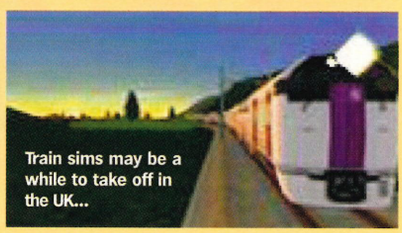
What am I bid for this lovely cat-flavoured can of water? Anyone?

PREVIEW! PREVIEW!

POPOLOCROIS 3

This ultra heart-warming, cute and almost unpronounceable RPG takes place 15 years after *Popolocrois 2*. Its protagonist Pietro has become the ruler of the kingdom and the adventure shifts to his eight-year-old son Pinon. Who just happens to befriend strange creature Papoo and discover signs of an impending crisis whilst exploring the Dragon Cave behind the castle. And so, their journey to the spirit world Fantanasia begins. The 3D cel shaded graphics will set your heart aflutter.

Think RPG madness, think Tim Burton, think mutant children born without nostrils...



Train sims may be a while to take off in the UK...

HARDCORE GAME!

A-TRAIN 2001

Sure, train driving enthusiasts can zip around a polygonised Japan in Taito's *Densha De Go 3*, but Artdink's latest takes it further. Promising to be the ultimate simulation of railroad management and urban development, the game requires plenty of tedium – sorry – groundwork, before any vehicles can run the tracks. Once sorted, trainspotters can utilise the Popegg printer for glossy postcards of their favourite train zooming by. Over 11,000 people here (so far) have been unable to resist the temptation...

JOYSTICK PLUS!

DENSHA DE GO!

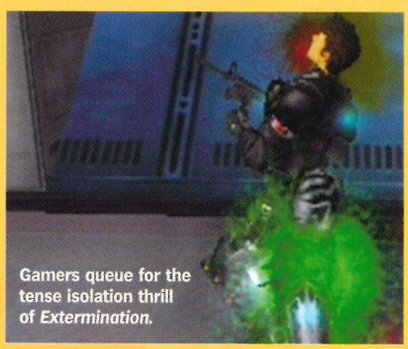
TRAIN CONTROLLER TYPE TWO

Obviously the first 'virtual dead man's handle' didn't cut it for fans and it seems that the added power of the Emotion Engine isn't enough either. For the ultimate experience, this USB train peripheral is the only way to go – just like the real thing. Well okay, except its made of plastic, a little smaller and perhaps a tad simplified... but it does rumble. Just don't run a red signal.

Ooh, pretty Japanese madness. Or not.

PS2 CHARTS

JAPANESE TOP 10



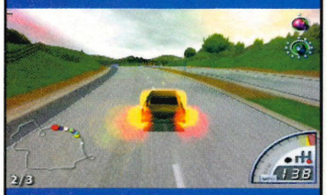
Gamers queue for the tense isolation thrill of *Extermination*.

1. **EXTERMINATION** (SCEI)
2. **PILOT NI NAROU! 2** (VICTOR INTERACTIVE)
3. **ZOE** (KONAMI)
4. **A-TRAIN 2001** (ARTDINK)
5. **ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS** (CAPCOM)
6. **F1 CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2000** (EA/SQUARE)
7. **BLOODY ROAR 3** (HUDSON)
8. **HAJIME NO IPPO VICTORIOUS BOXERS** (ESP)
9. **SHADOW OF MEMORIES** (KONAMI)
10. **NBA LIVE 2001** (EA/SQUARE)

Chart source: Dengeki (5/2/2001-11/3/2001)

SPY

INVENTORY
Your one-stop guide to the PS2 power-ups.



#07: SPEED BOOST

A speed boost, eh? And what is that exactly?
It's a device beloved of racing games (*WipEout, Rumble Racing, RC Revenge Pro* and so on) that increases (BOOSTS) your vehicle's rate of forward motion over time (SPEED). Honestly.

Where do you get such wondrous items? Halfords?
No. Speed boosts have the inexplicably handy knack of scattering themselves at strategic intervals around race tracks in between weapons, jumps and careless pedestrians.

So do I have to park my futuristic hover sled to pick them up or what?
No need. Simply drive over one and you'll activate a short wallop of capillary bursting velocity that will leave you breathless and your competitors with a different postal code.

Sweet. How do I tell a speed boost from a flattened badger?
Easy. Roadkill doesn't usually glow, rotate or float three feet above the track. Unless it's a particularly hot day.

Sounds great. Any words of advice before I leave the pits?
Pack a clean pair of underoos and remember three important words – mirror, signal, cheat.

SEAT BELTS NOT REQUIRED

All vehicles will take on tangible damage. This one is unscathed. So far.

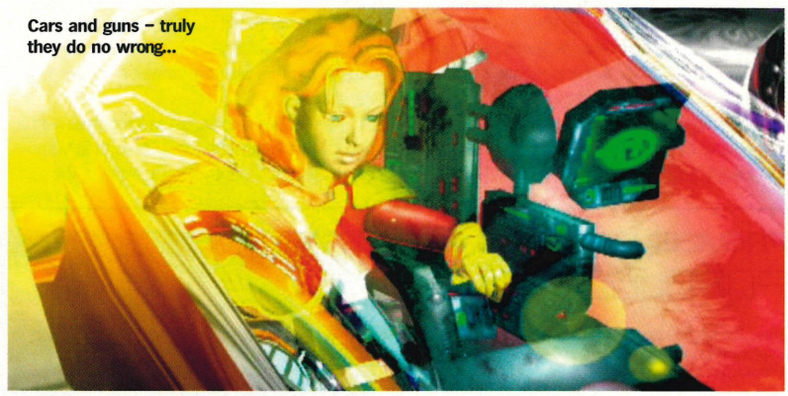
Motor Mayhem gives a new meaning to beating the rush hour traffic.

THINK *TWISTED METAL* but angrier. No, think *Twisted Metal* with a stonking great headache, a psychotic twitch and a rusty chainsaw. No, think *Quake III* – in cars. And that's what you're looking at right now. *Motor Mayhem*, developed by Beyond Games is, as enthusiastic Infogrames reps have gushed, "Only for the baddest of the bad." But such articulate speculation doesn't do it justice. *Motor Mayhem* is speaking for itself.

One to four players join each other in the VCL (Vehicle Combat League) a futuristic *Running Man*-style contest, with their souped-up vehicles and, to put it basically, smash the bejabbers out of each other. All the cars have destructible bodywork and the game arenas are interactive, allowing combatants to take chunks out of the scenery, as well as an opponent's fleshy parts. Beyond Games believes it's the sheer brutality of the experience that will lift *Motor Mayhem* away from the likes of *Twisted Metal*, *Rogue Trip* and *Vigilante 8* – much like SCI's pedestrian-killing *Carmageddon* did.

Besides of course, the heavy artillery, cruise missiles, mines, 'knocked it up in me shed' shields and power-ups, every driver has a deranged assistant to help them out. These drone sidekicks will flank you, sit in the sidecar or take to a gun turret at the back of your vehicle in order to pick off any annoying pursuers leaving you to the more pleasurable task at hand which is causing some severe whiplash. Oh, and the odd decapitation.

Unlike *Twisted Metal* et al, and more in the style of *Quake III*, *Motor Mayhem* even features heavily armoured, fully automotive end-of-level bosses which should make for a rounder, far more fulfiling experience. Publisher Infogrames reckons the petrol-sniffing action racer should be careering out of the garage next October. Get ready to rev it up. ☐ **BL**



Cars and guns – truly they do no wrong...

HMV PS2 CHARTS

Brought to you in conjunction with HMV.

The mighty *ZOE* takes its rightful place at the top of the charts.

	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER
1.	**ZONE OF THE ENDERS**	KCEJ (West)	Konami
2.	**STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER**	LucasArts	Activision
3.	**RAYMAN REVOLUTION**	Ubi Soft	Ubi Soft
4.	**ONI**	Bungle	Take 2
5.	**KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001**	EA Sports	EA Sports
6.	**ARMORED CORE 2**	From Software	Ubi Soft
7.	**SSX**	EA Sports (Canada)	EA Sports Big
8.	**MOTO GP**	Namco	SCEE
9.	**TIMESPLITTERS**	Free Radical Design	Eidos
10.	**FIFA 2001**	EA Sports	EA Sports

#2: STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER
LucasArts' debut PS2 title is everything we hoped for and more. Some disappointment may be felt that there is none of the original characters in here but it's an absorbing, gut-churner of a game with some pure next-gen graphics and true-to-the-movie sounds.

#6: ARMORED CORE 2
For the first time we have two mech games in the charts at once. *AC2* is substantially inferior to *ZOE* but still an absolute blast. Probably won't stick it out in the charts for too long with Konami's *Ring of Red* released this month.

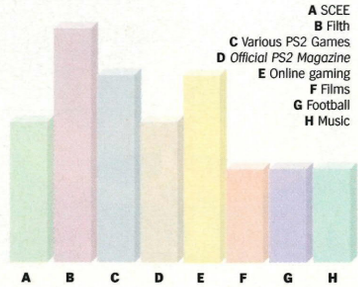
#1: ZONE OF THE ENDERS
For some this is the best PlayStation 2 title yet. Stunning (and we mean *stunning*) visuals, engaging story line and an inspired control system make this a must-buy title. Oh, and it comes bundled with a *MGS2* demo...

topdogforgames
www.hmv.co.uk

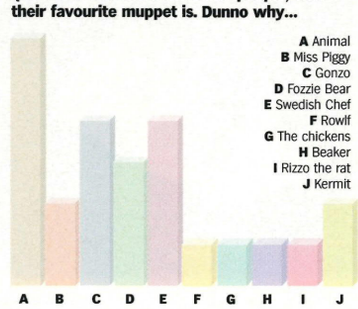
FACT BELCH

We set the questions. YOU give the answers.

QUESTION: **We asked 25 gamers which Internet sites they will look at first when they get their PS2 modem.**



QUESTION: **We asked the same people, who their favourite muppet is. Dunno why...**



**Source: A random sample of readers' replies to PS2@futurenet.co.uk. It could be you!*

£39.99

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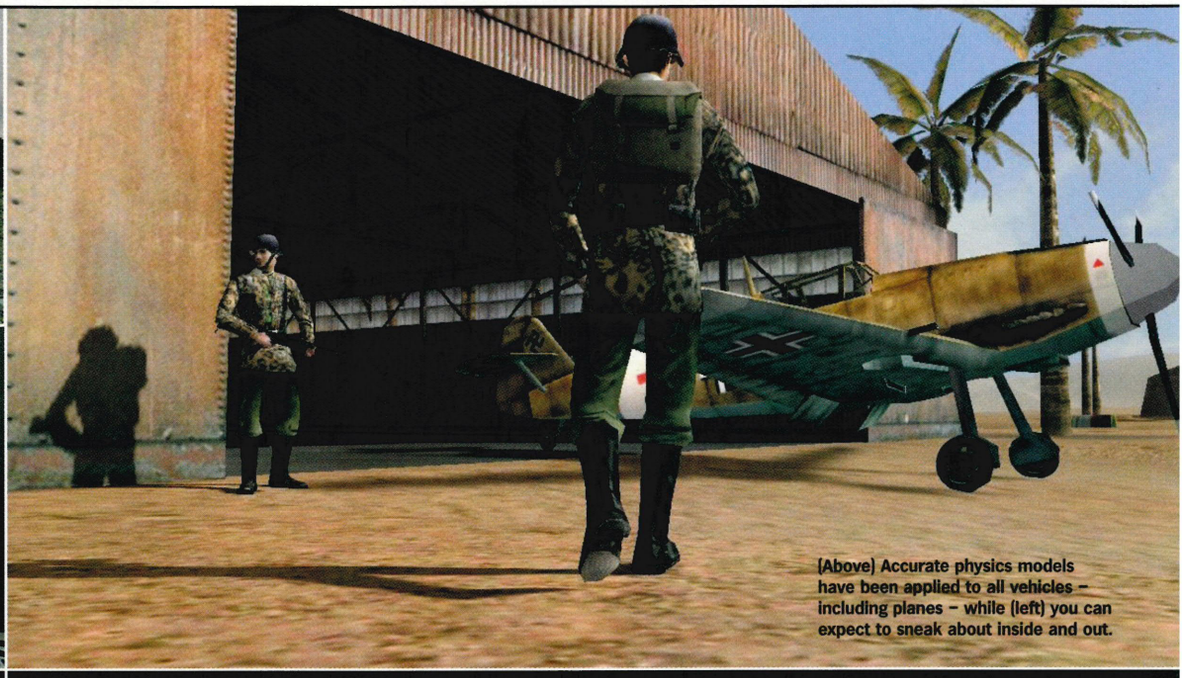
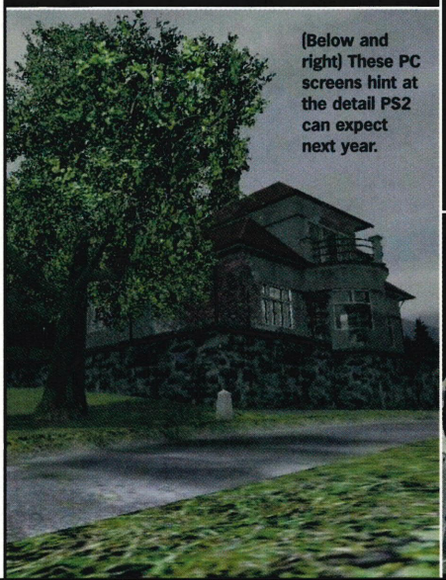


(Above) Accurate physics models have been applied to all vehicles – including planes – while (left) you can expect to sneak about inside and out.

BULLET FROM A GUN
_H&D2_ has an armoury Saddam would kill for

Illusion Softworks has made sure that this authentic WWII shooter is littered with state-of-the-art (well, for 1945) weapons that have been modelled as accurately as possible. *Hidden and Dangerous 2* packs in hand-to-hand weapons, pistols, sniper rifles, sub-machine-guns, assault rifles, bazookas, grenade launchers and flame-throwers. Also, players will have access to certain heavy weapons, grenades, mines and explosives, as well as large vehicles such as tanks and planes, each delivering their own unique brand of destruction. As for the control system and the chance of including a mouse and keyboard option? Producer Andy Morley says that the PS2 version, "Should make use of any appropriate peripherals that are available."



(Below and right) These PC screens hint at the detail PS2 can expect next year.

DANGEROUS LIASONS

Join the resistance in Illusion Softworks' *Hidden And Dangerous 2.*

WORLD WAR II games have invaded PlayStation 2, with a battalion of Nazi-quashing titles parachuting onto the console over the next 12 months. (see our War Games feature over on page 74). *Hidden And Dangerous 2* is the sequel to Czech developer Illusion Softworks' original squad-based third-person shooter that immersed the player in an authentic WWII environment.

The plot follows the central character, Special Forces operative Gary Bristol, as he takes on 23 daring missions around the globe. "Unlike in *H&D1* where the structure was mainly mission after mission, *H&D2* has a strong story line running all the way through it," says the producer of the game, Andy Morley. "There'll be NPCs and more relationships between characters than before. *H&D2* is more akin to the experience of *Metal Gear Solid 2*."

In the game, players recruit members of their combat team from different regiments around Europe each of which has unique skills and strengths that they bring to the unit. Once the mission has begun, you have real-time control over the different characters who can undertake a vast range of tasks such as shoot weapons, plant booby-traps and even drive vehicles. "You can command the soldiers in your team individually and the rest act upon AI depending on events around them," continues Morley. "Alternatively you can use the tactical interface to plan actions for your team and then execute them, the goal being to offer different styles of play." However, this isn't an arcade-style game, so if characters are shot and killed by vigilant enemy soldiers, they stay dead for the whole mission.

PS2 gamers can also expect a visual treat with Illusion Softworks promising motion-capture animation of the characters, photo-realistic textures, realistic physics, environmental and weather effects, plus atmospheric lighting and shadows. However, the graphical tricks won't ruin the authenticity of the period. "The special effects will be used subtly as this is not a sci-fi or fantasy game."

Multiplayer options have yet to be confirmed, but Illusion Softworks hasn't ruled out the use of the PS2's forthcoming Hard Disk Drive/Broadband capabilities for online warfare. *Hidden And Dangerous 2* is aiming for an early 2002 release through publishers Take 2. ☐ **JS**

//Players recruit members of their team from different European regiments//

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SHEEP DOG 'N' WOLF
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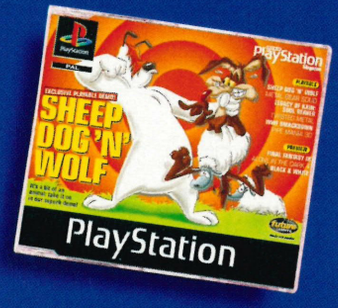

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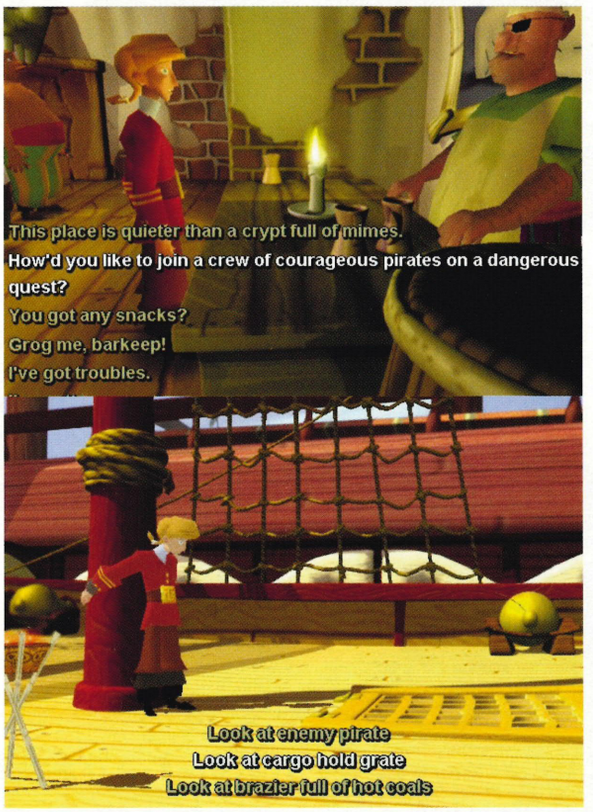
The *Official UK PlayStation Magazine* is the world's biggest-selling PlayStation magazine. On sale every 28 days. Got a PlayStation? Get this.

Great beards of fire! Evil LeChuck and his skeleton crew storm the PS2.


This place is quieter than a crypt full of mimes.
How'd you like to join a crew of courageous pirates on a dangerous quest?
You got any snacks?
Grog me, barkeep!
I've got troubles.
Look at enemy pirate
Look at cargo hold grate
Look at brazier full of hot coals

Guybrush Threepwood interacts with NPCs via a hilarious dialogue interface. The dialogue not the interface, you understand...

PIRATE GAMES

PS2 owners are about to experience LucasArts' fantastic *Escape From Monkey Island.*

ONE OF THE FUNNIEST and most original game franchises of the past decade has raised the skull and crossbones to plunder the PlayStation 2. *Escape from Monkey Island* is the fourth episode in the celebrated grog-guzzling graphic adventure series starring dorky pirate hero Guybrush Threepwood, his long-suffering beau Governess Elaine and the incompetent supernatural shenanigans of arch nemesis ghost pirate Le Chuck.

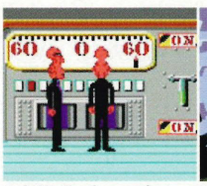
The stylish 3D game has already been very well received on the PC, but rather than relying on a mouse and keyboard, LucasArts has fully utilised the Dual Shock 2 to make the adventure more console-friendly. In this newest instalment, Guybrush and his new bride return to Melee Island after their honeymoon to discover that their mansion is about to be demolished. Furthermore the very-alive Elaine has been declared deceased (huh?) and a mysterious politician called Charles L Charles is taking over…

For anyone unfamiliar with LucasArts' cracking point-and-click adventures, they consist of moving Guybrush around a beautifully-rendered, rich and involving pirate world, solving insane puzzles and playing ridiculous mini-games that in previous adventures have involved destroying belligerent skeleton boat crews with cannon fire and taking part in a rather disgusting spitting contest. Guybrush can interact with dozens of bizarre characters such as voodoo priestesses, thieves, dodgy second-hand ship dealers and parrots by talking to them, swapping items or even having swashbuckling fights that ingeniously involve the trading of insults rather than the duelling of swords.

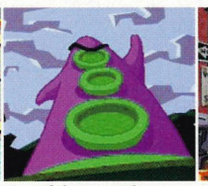
Escape From Monkey Island is like taking part in a hugely enjoyable, laugh-out-loud interactive cartoon with superb characters, great gags, top-notch voice acting, a wonderful Caribbean atmosphere and a clever plot that holds constant surprises for gamers. LucasArts' latest masterpiece is due to set sail in May – *OPS2* will have more information next month. ☐ **JS**

THE ADVENTURE GAME

As revealed to *OPS2* in our interview with President of LucasArts Simon Jeffery, the company is turning its attention to its back catalogue of fantastic PC adventure games. "We're looking to go back and re-visit single titles that we've released in the past," he says. "In other words, bring out sequels to games that previously haven't had sequels but deserve them." Here are *OPS2*'s favourite golden oldies that could be resurrected for PS2.



Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders
Starred Zak McKracken, a tabloid reporter who stumbles upon a bizarre conspiracy involving a two-headed squirrel, the Bermuda Triangle and an evil race of Elvis-obsessed aliens.



Day of the Tentacle
Madcap point-and-click classic featuring a scientist called Dr Edison, who accidentally unleashes a deadly tentacle on the world and then has to send a group of nerds through time to destroy it.

Sam and Max Hit the Road
Humorous cartoon adventure starring the insane pairing of Philip Marlowe-esque dog Sam and hyperactive white rabbit Max – based on the comic created by Steve Purcell.

Full Throttle
A rockin' adventure that successfully mixes elements of road movies such as *Mad Max* and *Easy Rider*. Stuffed with cracking one-liners and excellent mini-games including a biker gang beat-'em-up.

Grim Fandango
Based on the Mexican Day of the Dead festival, this dark adventure, starring the skeletal Manny Calavera, is set in a film noir detective-style afterlife. Features a host of characters and gorgeous 3D animation.

shorts

» Sony are celebrating the fact that PlayStation 2 has surpassed the company's target for ten million unit sales by 31 March 2001. Japan has sold 4.65 million, the USA 2.76 million and Europe 2.63 million units. In the UK alone, 366,000 PS2s were sold in just 101 days with over one million games shifted – an average of 2.83 per console.

» In the USA, publisher Simon and Schuster is making a game based on, wait for it, Skittles. The colourful confectionery brand will feature in a fantasy title called *A Darkened Sky*, where players have to find five pieces of a legendary talisman to defeat the forces of evil. Good. God…

» Realistic surround sound is now possible through normal two-channel stereo TV speakers, with Sony's new middleware S-Force 3D Sound Library. Any PS2 title using it, produces realistic 3D sound images allowing in-game characters to move eerily around the player. Konami's spooky *Silent Hill 2* is the first title to feature the ground-breaking technology.

» THQ has acquired the rights to a new cartoon show produced by the makers of *Ren and Stimpy*. Spumco's *The Ripping Friends* features four superheroes, whose quest is to make the world a safer place by being the most manly men on the planet. Expect the first PS2 title based on John Kricfalusi's latest insane creation next year.

» According to *New Scientist*, eye tracking technology developed for videogames by the University of Western Australia's 'Facelab' can be used to warn car drivers if they are falling asleep. The system monitors eye movement and pupil dilation – even through sunglasses – and decides whether to sound an alarm if they start to drop off.

» Rage Software, publisher of *Wild Wild Racing*, has just announced plans to bring a series of extreme sports videogames to PS2 in 2002, based on world champion inline roller-blading skaters Cesar Mora and Fablola da Silva.

» In Japan, Namco has licensed *Pac-Man* to appear on the packaging of a new drink called Asahi Chara. The non-sugar, calorie controlled beverage is the first step in a Namco marketing campaign to get the yellow pizza pie featured in a range of products and commercials.

» Game publisher Capcom has revealed it is to "scale down" its arcade game business to concentrate on the highly-profitable console market.

BLUE LINES

Sony, IBM and Toshiba have united to research and develop a hugely powerful microchip that could be used in a future games console » Rage has signed up David Beckham for a range of exclusive footie titles based on the world famous sarong-modeller » Namco subsidiary Monolith Soft has announced a PS2 sequel to the much-appreciated cult PSone (import-only) game *Xenogears*, entitled *XenoSaga*. Hardcore fans of the anime-style robot war RPG will be hoping that this next-gen incarnation will finally make it to the UK

PC and Mac owners can already play PSone games. Is PS2 next on the emulation list?

ILLUSTRATION: WILL BARRAS

PC OR NOT PC?

Could SCE's deal with Connectix open up PlayStation technology to more formats?

IN THE PAST, it was always the case that if you wanted to play certain videogames, you *had* to buy a particular manufacturer's hardware. This cosy situation continues to fragment with emulators readily available on the Internet providing PC and Mac users with all the console and arcade action they can eat – often for free.

Now, in a move that could pave the way for PSone games to appear on other formats, Sony Computer Entertainment has signed a joint technology agreement with the Connectix Corporation, makers of the Virtual Game Station, a PSone emulator for Mac and PC. Previously, the two companies were locked in a US court battle over the legality of the software, but the new agreement means that after 30 June SCE will acquire all assets of the current technology.

"In the long term, the two companies can now co-operate on a wide range of advanced emulation-based solutions that may help developers, gamers and even users of non-game platform systems, such as PCs and servers," says Roy McDonald, President of Connectix. SCE was equally pleased with the deal, announcing that they will be working closely with Connectix to explore emulation technologies from a R&D [research and development] standpoint. But will SCE actually use the technology to broaden the outlets for the PlayStation brand or is "joint technology agreement" just legalese for "burying the emulator at the bottom of the Atlantic"? The company has often said in the past that they would like PlayStation to become the VHS of videogames, creating a worldwide standard format – proved with the recent licensing of PS2 technology to third-party companies and rumours of VGS's adoption for Microsoft's upcoming Xbox.

//Connectix hasn't ruled out the possibility of a PS2 emulator in the future//

Whether you pay £80 for a PSone console or £80 for a PSone emulator (currently the VGS retails at £39.99) the end result is more people buying PSone games and Sony extending the life of their ageing format. All this is to SCE's advantage when you consider it's the games themselves that drive profits, not the sale of the pre-existing hardware behind them.

Sega has already shown the way forward in this respect, having Dreamcast technology incorporated into Pace TV set top boxes and suggesting the possibility of a compatible PC graphics card, even though the actual manufacture of the Dreamcast console has now ceased.

So, what about a PS2 emulator? SCE has refused to comment, but Connectix hasn't ruled out the possibility of this happening in the future. McDonald speculates that it will take at least a 2Ghz system to provide adequate gameplay of PS2 games. "We don't expect to see serious commercial emulators for PS2 until at least 25 per cent of new consumer PCs are at this level, which looks to be at least two years from now – but we can't comment on our plans in this area, just yet." *OPS2* will be keeping a close eye on further emulation developments – watch this space for all the details as they unfold. □ **JS**

VGS runs *Driver 2* perfectly, with control provided by keyboard or USB joypad.

BUT IS IT LEGAL?

OPS2 on the stand.

Sony argued that by reverse-engineering the PSone operating system to find out how it worked, development of the VGS infringed copyright. Connectix argued that this was perfectly legitimate, as none of the original Sony BIOS was copied or included in the finished Virtual Game Station. Emulators are still very much a grey area legally, and all the major videogames companies feel use of such software could be a way for people to play titles without paying (and adding insult to injury, the VGS allows you to play imports and gold CDs.)

Still, emulators keep defunct games machines alive and kicking, so retro classics such as *Manic Miner* don't just disappear into obscurity. MAME lets PC and Mac owners download and play for free virtually every coin-op made in the Eighties including *Galaxians*, *Defender* and *Donkey Kong*. Other notorious examples include the Ultra HLE, that allows N64 titles be uploaded onto a PC or Mac, Bleem! – which SCE is still fighting in court over its ability to play PSone games on a Dreamcast – and Datel's new Game Boy emulator for PS2. Extending the user base or an excuse for people to get something for nothing? The debate rages on. For the ultimate PSone emulator though, look no further than a PlayStation 2. □ **JS**

coin-op

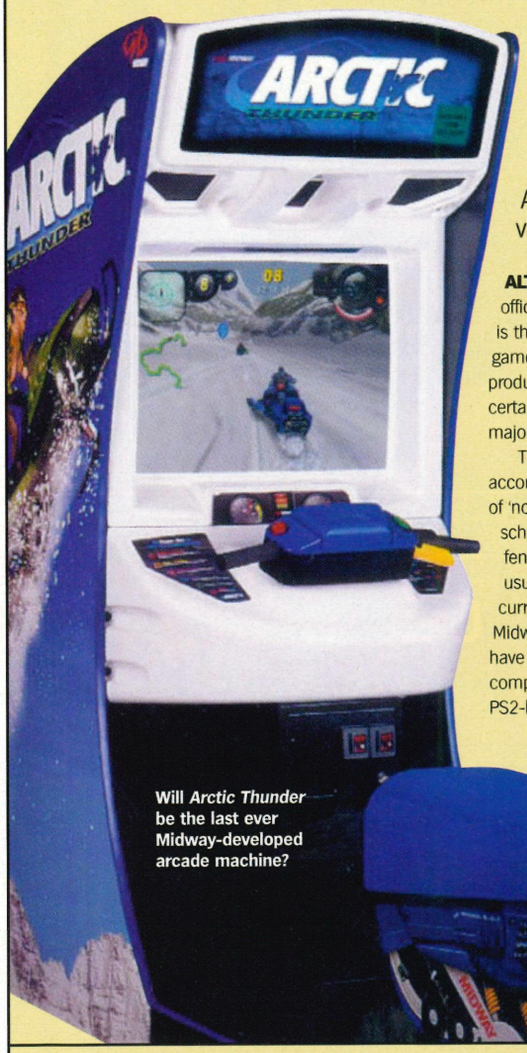
With **Guy Woodward**, Editor of coin-op bible *AB Europe*.

GAME OVER FOR MIDWAY?

A year on from retiring the Atari brand, Midway is also on the verge of coin-op extinction.

ALTHOUGH THE FIRM has yet to officially confirm it, the word on the street is that there will be no more coin-op games rolling out of Midway's Chicago production line. Also out on the street, and certainly off the production line, are the majority of Midway's coin-op workforce.

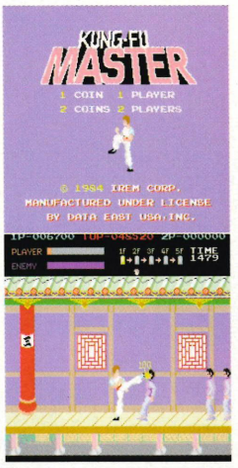
The guarded announcement was accompanied by the standard spoiling tactic of 'not disclosing our product release schedule in advance.' But while such fence-sitting could be attributed to the usual attempts at protecting the value of current releases, protecting the value of Midway's plunging share price appears to have taken precedent in this case. The company has relied on a single game – PS2-bound snowmobile title, *Arctic Thunder* – for its presence at coin-op trade shows since last September, and will continue to do so 'for the next few months'. Thereafter, Midway refuses to commit itself to a coin-op variant of *Mortal Kombat 5*, despite its expected 2001 release into arcades, and the apparent gap in the coin-op market for a solid, licensed beat-em-up with a proven cult following. Instead, the firm is pinning its hopes on its existing TouchMaster multi-game countertop, and the accompanying tournament network, which has yet to be rolled out. Midway did at least say that it is 'actively seeking additional employees for its home videogame business'. But it seems the developers of such classics as *Cruisin' World* and *NFL Blitz* could now be seeking new employment. ☐ **GW**



Will *Arctic Thunder* be the last ever Midway-developed arcade machine?

lost classics

Games of arcade past.



07: KUNG FU MASTER

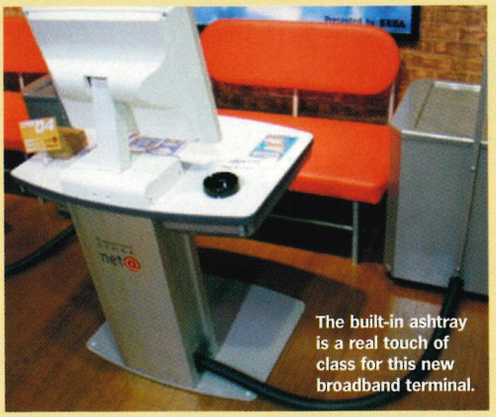
(IREM 1984)

The first ever horizontal scrolling beat-em-up, *Kung Fu Master*'s array of six moves (high punch, high kick, low punch, low kick, jumping punch and, you've guessed it, jumping kick) had many Bruce Lee wannabes glued to the joystick back in the mid-eighties. Whether it was flower pots dropping on your head or men in green pyjamas throwing boomerangs, the perils were endless. Well, they lasted for five levels and then, er, started again.

THREE IS THE MAGIC NUMBER

Convergence: the name of the game in Japan.

The mighty triumvirate of Sony, Sega and Namco are developing a special terminal – based on the PS2 chip and housing a 100 megabit per second processor – to be installed in arcades to introduce users to the capabilities of broadband. Games will be delivered via fibre-optic networks, along with advertisements and movie clips. Sega and Namco are increasingly desperate to attract more customers to their dwindling arcade chains and the pair are busy beavering away on new online content to achieve this. Meanwhile Sony has a grander scheme, with residential net distribution of games and images via PS2 consoles no longer simply a pipe dream. The idea is that the network will initially link up with retail outlets, where gamers can check out trial versions of new games before buying them.



The built-in ashtray is a real touch of class for this new broadband terminal.

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

Coin-op veteran planning to invade your home.

Spain isn't exactly the first country which springs to mind when the conversation turns to great game developers. Yet unbelievably, Barcelona-based Gaelco has survived for two decades as the only European coin-op video game manufacturer of note. The firm is now planning to expand into the home videogame market, and is currently working on a PS2 version of its quirky *Smashing Drive* racer. But don't just believe us, "Gaelco has to be present in the consumer business," says top dog Julian Goicoa. "We've already put our money on the table in terms of making the necessary software conversions." So there.

Gaelco's *Smashing Drive* will be making the transfer to the PS2.

Double-barrelled: More WWII-inspired blasting with two new *Medal of Honor* games heading to PS2.

WORLD WAR X 2

EA blitz PlayStation 2 with a double helping of *Medal of Honor*.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST surprise hits on PSone was the atmospheric WWII first-person action adventure series *Medal of Honor*. Not only did the games provide a healthy dose of stealth and shooting, but also immersed the player in an authentic, historically-accurate depiction of war-torn Europe under a brutal Nazi regime, complete with real photos and footage. EA is now bringing the franchise to PS2 in the form of two completely original titles – *Medal of Honor Frontline* and *Medal of Honor Fighter Command*.

Frontline continues the escapades of Lt Jimmy Patterson and is set in the four month period between missions three and four of the original PSone game, during the ill-fated Operation Market Garden – immortalised in the Richard Attenborough film *A Bridge Too Far*. "We were always interested in the debacle that was Market Garden, especially as a counterpoint to the success of Operation Overlord," says Lead Animator at developer EALA, Sunil Thankamushy. "The team thought it would be an interesting period of time to explore in terms of Jimmy's participation. From day one we wanted *MOH* to grow into a fully-fledged franchise, so we planned accordingly with the mission dates in the first game, to give us space in the timeline for *Frontline* to take place."

Fifteen assignments take Lt Patterson behind enemy lines to complete various combat and stealth missions including the destruction of a German naval base and the disarming of the undercarriage of the Nijmegan Bridge, eventually leading towards the ultimate aim of stealing the Nazis' experimental fighter, the Ho IX Flying Wing (see History Lesson).

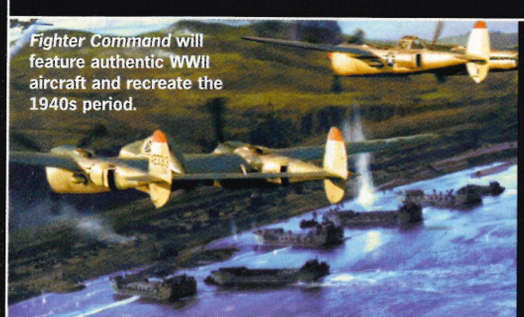
//*Frontline* is set in-beween missions three and four of the PSone game//

The other *Medal of Honor* title, *Fighter Command*, is a flight combat-sim set in the South Pacific WWII arena, complete with realistic aircraft that run reconnaissance and battle missions against Japanese air and navy forces. EALA has consulted pilots who actually flew during the war and conducted extensive research on the planes, which include aerodynamic fighters and heavy bombers. *Fighter Command* will also have co-operative and head-to-head multiplayer modes, including an option for two players to fly in the same aircraft as pilot and tail gunner. Expect *Frontline* and *Fighter Command* in early 2002. ■ **JS**

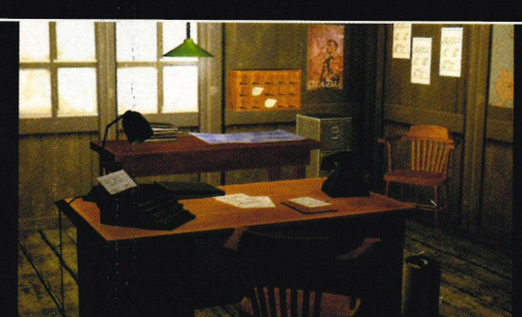
HISTORY LESSON

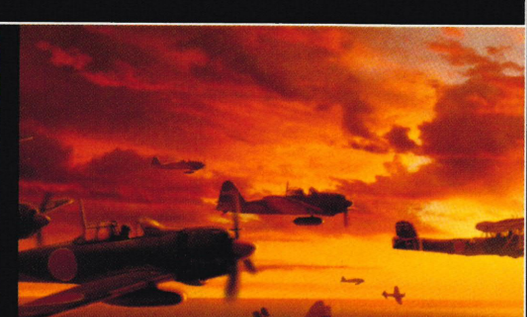
Why base *MOH Frontline* around the Ho IX Flying Wing?

Hitler's right-hand man, Hermann Goering was head of the German Air Force during WWII and was thrilled with the development of Ho IX Flying Wing – a top secret jet fighter built by the Horten brothers. With this advanced aircraft, the Nazis could have changed the outcome of the war if the Allies hadn't intervened and grounded the prototypes in 1945. "We asked the Smithsonian Institute's Russ Lee to consult with us on the designs of the Ho IX," says Sunil Thankamushy. "Russ is an expert on the Hortens, so we feel very confident that he can ensure all facets of its design are accurate, as well as provide a number of insights as to its history, construction and operation."



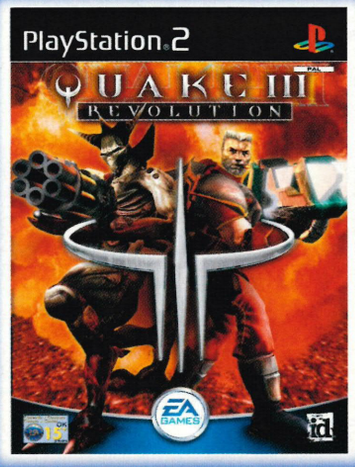
Fighter Command will feature authentic WWII aircraft and recreate the 1940s period.





HMV

seriouslyaddictive...



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Quake III Revolution™

The world's leading first person action game finally arrives on PlayStation 2. *Quake III Revolution* throttles players through amazingly detailed levels of ultra-smooth action, pitting them against the fiercest warriors in the universe. Includes a robust new single player experience as well as classic multiplayer madness via an action-packed four-way split screen.

Out Now

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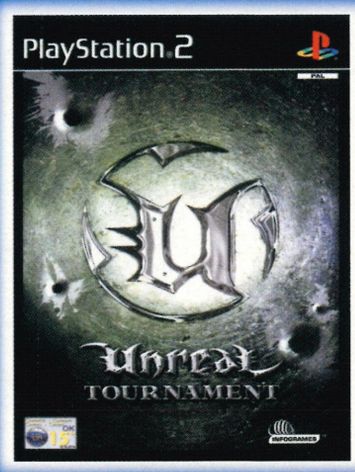
Army Men™ Sarge's Heroes™ 2

The boys are back and ready to do battle in stunning graphics and incredible new effects and environments! Featuring 18 missions with a variety of objectives including search and destroy, and rescue and defend. Plus tonnes of cool weapons with spectacular effects including: Assault Rifle, Bazooka, Flame Thrower and Grenade Launchers. Prepare for another gigantic war!

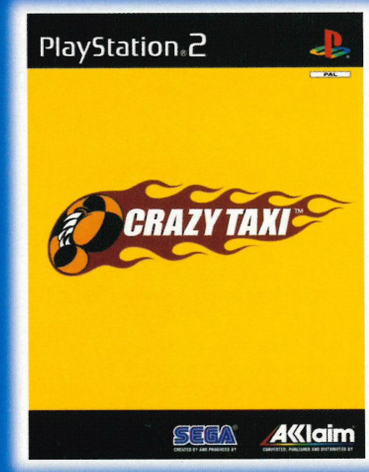
Out Now



Unreal Tournament

The PC Game of the Year makes its console debut on PlayStation 2. Take on super intelligent 'bots' or humans in four game modes: Capture The Flag, Assault, Domination and Deathmatch. Battle in intense multiplayer action or the ultimate head to head battle connecting two machines via I-link. With over 50 stunning levels, this is one of the best first person shooters about on PS2.

Out Now



Crazy Taxi

Prepare for the craziest cab ride of your life! Weave through crowded streets, across sidewalks and even underwater in a frantic race to deliver passengers on time! In *Crazy Taxi* time is money and only the craziest of cabbies earn their fare! Choose from four different cabs and drivers, each with their own style and attitude. Features a rocking soundtrack from hit bands Offspring and Bad Religion.

Released 27th April

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SPY

THE BEAUTIFUL

OPS2 continues to uncover the elements that'll make the best PlayStation 2 games ever conceived. This month: The most magical, spell-casting, goblin-punishing, hit point-tastic RPG in the kingdom. Now with added goblins!

1. The ability to interact with an ever-expanding online world such as the one provided by *EverQuest* on the PC or *Phantasy Star Online* on the Dreamcast. A special Internet server provided by the rather generous games company allows you to connect to the on-going online fantasy RPG for free. Or maybe not.

2. Breathtaking environments that allow your character to see a detailed landscape stretching miles into the distance – similar to Infogrames' sci-fi fantasy game *Outcast* on the PC. Expect gnarled forests, dangerous mountain passes, dark ancient castles and incredibly detailed villages populated by straw-chewing inbred yokels and pro-fox hunt lobbyists.

3. The brilliance and scope of level design, story and character development from Shigeru Miyamoto's *Legend of Zelda* series.

4. Impressive devilish/angelic monsters that can be summoned by the player to wreak havoc on enemies – think of an expanded version of the beastly Guardian Forces in *Final Fantasy IX*. Alternatively, imagine the damage you could do by summoning special 'bonus' characters such as a massive, malevolent Jimmy Hill or a particularly scary 50 foot wide Bagpuss. Shudder.

5. Eye-sizzling particle effects that create sparkling magical spells, swirl atmospheric mist around your character's feet and deliver real-time weather – as seen with the excellent rain and wind effects in *Metal Gear Solid 2*.

6. The intuitive battle system of *Final Fantasy VII*, without those *insanely* annoying random battles that pop up every ten seconds to endlessly interrupt the mind-blowingly complicated task you're desperately trying to achieve.

7. A fabulous addition is the unique 'kick the living daylights out of a non-player character who constantly repeats information when you approach them' power-up, for releasing all that hundred-hour plus pent-up RPG aggression.

8. Numerous places, characters and legendary swords with names like Erikiarth, Kunark, Norbain and Thrangor, plus plenty of ridiculous archaic spellings such as 'wyrrm' instead of 'worm'.

9. The communication system from Sega's *Phantasy Star Online* which ingeniously allows players to converse with each other online via graphic symbols or by constructing phrases that automatically translate into the language of RPG fans from around the world. A Cockney Rhyming Slang translation feature would also be included for when Guy Rutchie comes raaaahnd.

10. Players should have the usual choices of Wizard, Barbarian, Thief and so on, with the addition of more unusual characters such as Porn Star, Murderer, Footballer and Celebrity Gardener. Seeing Alan Titchmarsh being rapaciously devoured by Cerberus, the three-headed canine guardian of the Underworld, would be worth the asking price of the game alone.

11. Includes elements of RPG/FPS hybrids such as the nightmarish deserted spaceship scenario of *System Shock 2* or the futuristic conspiracy shenanigans of *Deus Ex*. Each title has plenty of action and atmosphere, but also the ability to upgrade weapons and abilities for your player character, adding great gameplay depth to the first-person shooter.

12. A mythical collection of classic and modern baddies including ogres, elves, vampires, werewolves, pirates, griffins, minotaurs, aliens, Nazis, poltergeists, devils, dragons and, of course, millions of goblins – just to annoy *OPS2* Editor and closet D&D worshipper, Mr Goldsmith. *(Who's currently contemplating sacking your sorry arse, Sefton – Ed)*

13. Wonderful weapons of destruction including classic swords, magical staffs and medieval flick-knives as well as futuristic laser guns, *Star Wars* light sabers, cannons and the Redeemer miniature nuclear missiles from *Unreal Tournament*. Each of the armaments can be upgraded with extra features and unearthly powers, such as deadly homing machine gun bullets or Bruce Campbell's chainsaw/shotgun combo from the *Evil Dead* trilogy.

*A rip-roaring RPG

GAME

ILLUSTRATION: BEN KIRCHNER

PlayStation®2 RELEASE DATES

Game Name	Genre	Publisher
June 2001		
Army Men: Green Rogue	Action	3DO
ATV Offroad Fury	Arcade racer	SCEE
Big Wave Surfing	Surf sim	Acclaim
Bloody Roar 3	Fighting	Virgin
Fur Fighters	Shoot-'em-up	Acclaim
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Adventure	Midway
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec	Racing sim	SCEE
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver II	Adventure	Eidos
Le Mans 24 Hour	Racing sim	Infogrames
Lotus Challenge	Racing sim	Virgin
NBA Street	Sports sim	EA
Onimusha: Warlords	Adventure	Capcom
Portal Runner	Action	3DO
Red Faction	First-person shooter	THQ
Stunt GP	Arcade racer	Virgin
Wacky Racers	Arcade racer	Infogrames
WDL: War Jetz	Adventure	3DO
Third quarter 2001		
18 Wheeler	Arcade racer	Acclaim
Age of Empires II	RPG	Konami
Alone in the Dark IV	Adventure	Infogrames
CART Fury	Arcade racer	Midway
Championship Motocross 2002	Racing sim	THQ
Commandos 2	Strategy	Eidos
Crash Bandicoot	Platformer	Konami
Dark Cloud	RPG	SCEE
Ephemeral Fantasia	RPG	Konami
Evil Twin	Adventure	Ubi Soft
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Strategy	Interplay
G-Surfers	Arcade racer	TBA
Half-Life	First-person shooter	Sierra
Legion: Legend of Excalibur	Strategy	Midway
Paris-Dakar Rally	Rally sim	Acclaim
Project Eden	Adventure	Eidos
Resident Evil Code: Veronica	Adventure	Capcom
Rune: Viking Warlord	Adventure	Take 2
Run Like Hell	Adventure	Interplay
Soldier Of Fortune	First-person shooter	Majesco
Spy Hunter: The Return	Arcade racer	Midway
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	First-person shooter	Majesco
The Bouncer	RPG/Adventure	Square
The Gift	Adventure	Cryo
Titanium Angels	Shoot-'em-up	SCi
Twisted Metal: Black	Arcade racer	SCEE
UEFA Challenge	Football sim	Infogrames
Wing Over III	Flight sim	JVC
WipEout Fusion	Arcade racer	SCEE
WTA Tour Tennis	Sports sim	Konami
Zombie Revenge	Adventure	Acclaim
Fourth quarter 2001		
Bass Fishing	Fishing sim	THQ
Cool Boarders: Code Alien	Snowboard sim	SCEE
Conflict: Desert Storm	Adventure	SCi
Devil May Cry	Adventure	Capcom
Dropship	Adventure	SCEE
Duke Nukem	Adventure	Take 2
Final Fantasy X	RPG	Square
Grand Theft Auto 3	Action	Take 2/Rockstar
Herdy Gerdy	Herding game	Eidos
Hidden and Dangerous 2	Adventure	Take 2
ISS Pro Evolution	Football sim	Konami
Kelly Slater: Pro Surfer	Surfing sim	Activision
Kessen II	Strategy	EA
Klonoa 2	Platformer	SCEE
Legion: Legend of Excalibur	Strategy	Midway
Motor Mayhem	Racer/Shoot-'em-up	Infogrames
Prisoner Of War	Strategy	Codemasters
Robot Wars	TV tie-in	BBC
Shadow Man: 2econd Coming	Adventure	Acclaim
Silent Hill 2	Adventure	Konami
Space Channel 5	Dancing game	Sega
Spyro The Dragon 4	Platformer	Havas
Stuntman	Adventure/racer	Infogrames
UEFA Champions League	Football sim	Take 2
VIP	Adventure	Ubi Soft
Virtua Fighter 4	Beat-'em-up	Sega
World Rally Championship 2001	Rally sim	SCEE
Release dates TBC		
007 Racing	Adventure/racer	EA
Medal Of Honor: Frontline	First-person shooter	EA
Medal Of Honor: Fighter Command	Flight sim	EA
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty	Adventure	Konami
The Getaway	Adventure/racer	SCEE
The World Is Not Enough	First-person shooter	EA
Wolverine	Adventure	Activision

**Game release dates are correct at the time of going to press.*

SPY

"Has it got a mini-bar?" *OPS2*'s sub-god George Walter takes the Galaxy for a small spin...

ARE WE THERE YET?

Ford brings an end to back seat boredom with the new Galaxy.

EVERYONE REMEMBERS THE sheer childhood misery of being a stuck in a car with your parents as you crawled along a traffic-jammed motorway towards some godawful rainy British safari park. The only way of staving off utter boredom was listening to your dad's Radio 2 choons on the car stereo, eating mum's curled-up tongue sandwiches or repeatedly punching your little brother in the eye until he started crying – enjoyable, but only of limited use.

Mercifully, today's lucky kids can enjoy playing *Tekken Tag Tournament* or *SSX* in the car should you buy the new Ford Galaxy people carrier. This expansive beast of a vehicle has all the usual mod cons including airbags, 24 valve 2.8 litre engine, heated windscreens, satellite navigation and of course, a big steering wheel. However, with an additional "investment" of £1,500, Ford provides smart twin TV screens in the rear of the front headrests, a VHS video recorder, headphones and all the leads to connect up your PlayStation 2 (stingily sold separately). Each of the smart hi-res seven-inch displays is independent from each other, meaning that you can have one showing a film with the other freed up for PS2 action. Nice.

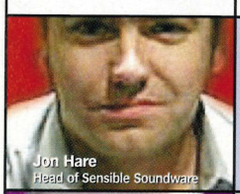
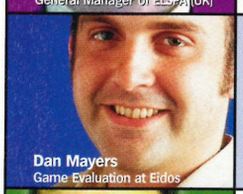
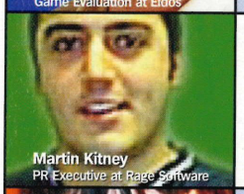
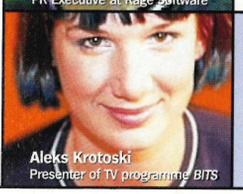
While it might not be the best idea for father to lean round and join in a multiplayer session of *TimeSplitters* while driving, for the kids it means they can play the latest games or watch DVDs. Don't get too excited yet though – the full Ford Galaxy Ghia Multimedia package will set you back a cool £29,195. Hello, Mr Bank Manager? ☐ **JS**

**Check out the Galaxy on www.ford.co.uk.*

PHOTOGRAPHY: GAVIN ROBERTS

5x5

Every issue, we put five questions to five industry professionals. This month: Sex and videogames

	Are videogames mature enough to handle so-called "adult" themes?	Is there such a thing as a 'sexy' videogame?	Could nudity ever be acceptable in a PlayStation 2 title?	Are 'adult' videogames ultimately just a turn-off for gamers?	Give an example of sexual content in a videogame.
 **Jon Hare** Head of Sensible Soundware	The problem for these products lies in the use of the word 'games' (perceived as a kids thing) in conjunction with the word 'adult' (perceived by most people to mean sex, violence, drugs and swearing). In the UK we're taking on a more American morality in videogames where violence is an 'acceptable' naughty thing, but sex and subversive culture are seen as 'unacceptable'.	No, not really. There is the cool, must-have videogame and the slick, well presented, highly playable videogame, but unfortunately the medium through which videogames are delivered and the environments in which they are normally played are just not sexy. Occasionally I see an arcade machine with some amazing new way of inputting control that I might call sexy.	My feeling is that the more nudity is used in context or for 'artistic' purposes, the less it can be objected to as part of the content of a software product. Unfortunately as long as we as an industry are perceived by many to be making mindless commercial spin-offs for short-term profit, we're unlikely to be taken seriously as an adult (responsible and artistically creative) medium.	There's a misconception that an 'adult' piece of software is by definition like some low quality, under the counter, Swedish porno mag. This is blatantly not the case. To me adult means not that a game is deliberately sexual or offensive, just that creative barriers are removed so that if you want to add that kind of content, in context, you can do it.	An example from my unpublished *Sex 'n' Drugs 'n' Rock 'n' Roll* game. Nigel is a wannabe rockstar who has just signed his first record contract. He dreams of a life of more women than he can handle. A tune plays as he emerges from a giant flower into an arena surrounded by hundreds of naked women... **Visit www.mp3.com/sexndrugsnrocknroll to hear the soundtrack to Jon's unpublished opus*
Mike Rawlinson General Manager of ELSPA (UK)	The Interactive leisure software industry can certainly cope with all types of content. The Video Recordings Act covers the control and rating of the strongest forms of content, while the ELSPA (European Leisure Software Publishers Association) Voluntary Rating System ensures that consumers can make judgements on the remainder.	I don't think so. A videogame may contain images of "sexy" people. Sexually interactive CD-ROMS will contain sexual images. One should not be confused by the two very different types of product.	There is no reason why a PS2 title could not contain nudity. The product would be rated in accordance with the Video Recordings Act or the ELSPA Voluntary Ratings System depending on the extent of the nudity. However, it is highly unlikely that a PS2 title would contain gratuitous nudity unless it was essential to the game.	I'm not a serious gamer, and certainly not into adult CD-ROM products, but my guess, knowing this type of person, is that they would be a definite turn-off. To most serious gamers the most important element of content is gameplay, gameplay and more gameplay!	See reply to my last question. I can't. **Check out www.elspa.com for ELSPA-related frolics*
 **Dan Mayers** Game Evaluation at Eidos	There's definitely a sense of the schoolboy sniggers when it comes to sexual content in games which isn't necessarily a good thing. If adult content actually contributes to moving the plot of a game forward then fair play. If it's a just a gratuitous tit flash then that's much harder to justify.	If people fancied Daphne out of *Scooby Doo* 25 years ago, then the chances are people will reap their own sexual delights from characters in videogames. People are capable of finding pretty much anything sexy.	It's already been acceptable in PSone titles (*Retro Helix* had a grand nipple count of two) and since the PS2 demographic's older it's highly likely we'll see more of it. Hooray for boobies?	The Japanese have had a healthy adult videogame audience for years – if fiddling with the kinds of S&M depravities they offer up can be considered healthy.	*Strip Poker* on the Commodore 64, around 1983. The pixel powered mush masking as my poker partner asked if I wanted to remove her 'teddy'. Thus fully corrupted I strode into the world **Ex-OPM fella Moyers is working on secret things...*
 **Martin Kitney** PR Executive at Rage Software	Really depends on the platform – I'm not sure how Game Boy Color would handle it. With the audience becoming more widespread on the sophisticated machines such as PS2, I think any theme can work if it's done properly.	Konami's *ISS Pro Evolution 2* is sexy, just for the sheer brilliance of the gameplay. Can't think of a product that has real sexy characters...	Depends on the laws that be. I could accept female nudity scattered here and than there. But only as long as it was artistic of course!	I think they're not taken seriously because there has never been a real objective to a game of that nature.	Maybe Empire were just testing the water with their product *Sheep* – the add-on pack might be interesting. Being a northern lad, that's all that springs to mind at the moment... **Rage's* Wild Wild Racing *is available to buy now*
 **Aleks Krotoski** Presenter of TV programme *BITS*	It depends on the mental maturity of the gamers themselves. But if porn publishers are starting to get in on the interactive art act, then that's a pretty sure sign that something's going on down there.	Sexy no, sexual yes. Whatever turns you on. Nothing yet released makes me purr, although *Black And White* is pretty darn nice. Mmmmmmmm.	Well, films have made tits and ass a business – we'll get an eyeful sooner or later. But initially the nudity will be the sole Unique Selling Point for whatever title dares to unsheath itself.	Yes, because they're just poor. There's not a single bit of good gameplay in something like *Lula The Sexy Empire* or *Panty Raider: From Here To Immaturity*. They're kitsch. They're bookends. They're one-handed games. Dull.	Belladonna in *Thrill Kill*'s got the corner on the post-coital rush market. Sorry Lara, your moans don't do it quite like she does. **There's more about Aleks and the rest of the BITS ladeez on the Web site – www.4later.com/bits*

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WORDS: SAM RICHARDS/PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK CORKE

MORALES BOOST

Still not convinced as to the professional quality of Jester Interactive's ingenious music creation tool *MTV Music Generator 2*? Then how about a recommendation from house music overlord David Morales, direct from the MTV studios in Times Square, NYC? *OPS2* takes notes.

"Hello, I'm David Morales," says David Morales, fixing the camera with the kind of soft, sincere stare normally reserved for public information films about saving the environment by boiling less water in your kettle. "If you're looking to up your game and take it to the next level, *MTV Music Generator 2* is all you need." This may be the seventh time Morales has uttered this endorsement this evening, but his conviction is unwavering. Frankly, if a man with tattooed biceps the size of Manhattan has something to say, you listen. If that man also happens to be one of the most in-demand DJs and producers in dance music today, you hang on his every word.

David Morales is here to enthuse about *MTV Music Generator 2* on film for the game's intro sequence. As a legion of assorted music biz weirdos spill out of MTV's Times Square complex into the New York City twilight, Morales arrives on foot and strides purposefully in the opposite direction. Instantly gravitating towards the studio decks, Morales instinctively strokes the turntables and caresses the crossfader while delivering his lines to camera.

"Since I spend most of my time DJing in clubs all around the world, my travel schedule leaves very little time for producing or making music of my own. But, with the *MTV Music Generator 2*, I can kick it in my hotel room, I can kick it in my living room, I can kick it in my bedroom. All I need is a TV, a PlayStation 2 and *MTV Music Generator 2*." Sure, Morales' lines are cheesily scripted, but even after the director calls a wrap on the evening's shooting, Morales continues to wax lyrical about the game.

"I have two sons," says Morales, detailing his first encounter with *MTV Music Generator [it was called* Music 2000 *in the UK]*. "They're seven and fourteen so they're obviously both into PlayStation. They both have PlayStation 2s as well. My eldest son knew about the first *MTV Music Generator* game. When I brought the new version home, he just snatched the game from me and I didn't even see it!"

Like many converts, Morales was sceptical at first about the scope of the program but he was soon singing its praises.

"I wasn't really into it when I first saw it – I have all the latest professional software in my studio and I thought, "what can this add?" But I was totally surprised. With your own studio equipment you're always trying to find new sounds and new ways to use the instruments. With *MTV Music Generator 2*, besides the sounds they give you, you can create your own. If they only offered you ten riffs, you're just gonna get bored. The fact that you can sample an outside source, whether it be a voice or a thing from another record, is really incredible. If you're a natural songwriter you can even place the notes where you want to create melodies."

PHAT MY PITCH UP

In his game intro spiel, Morales claims that the beats you create in *MTV Music Generator 2* can sound "just as phat as any professional producer". He also talks about hauling a PlayStation 2 around the world on his globetrotting DJ missions in order to tinker with ideas to take back to the studio. Is this really true?

"Sure! I do carry *MTV Music Generator* with me and hook the PSone up to the TV in my hotel room and instead of watching four channels of bad TV I have some fun trying to create music. I can come up with an idea that I could use in a dance track and even dump the actual sounds and samples from the game to another external source and continue on in the studio. My concern at first was how closely it would be applicable to what I do in the studio, whether I could create with the game and work on original ideas. But it's incredible."

Essentially though, Morales is inspired by *MTV Music Generator 2's* appeal as an entry level tool for rookie producers. While it may be testament to the program's depth and versatility that experienced professional musicians can get something out of it, *MTV Music Generator 2's* primary audience is still the music fan who has limited idea of how to go about creating music themselves. Instead of grappling with notes on a stave or the thick manuals

//"I wish it had been out when I was young. It's a great tool..." David Morales on *MTV Music Generator 2*//

David Morales gives his best beatmatching pout for the watching cameras.

MORALES IN MINUTES

David Morales claims you can create a track sounding just as phat and professional as him using *MTV Music Generator 2*. So with the game in hand, where do you go to find those essential Morales sound ingredients?

RHYTHM
Head into the library of House riffs and select Danceflaw. It's one of the most reliable classic house riffs on offer. Give an extra kick to the bass by overlaying it with Kabuki, which you'll find in the Breakbeat library.

BASS
The riffs named Bootsy and Avenue from the Breakbeat library can be laid back to back. They blend perfectly with the Danceflaw rhythm to create a punchy, funky bottom end.

MELODY
For authenticity, you'll have to tweak samples in the Riff Editor. Pizza Bridge 1, Leccy Piano Bridge 1 and User 003 (all found in the Garage library) combine well for a cheesy Italo-house effect, but don't quite have the subtlety of classic Morales magic.

VOCALS
Morales is a master of manipulating soulful vocals over tough beats. Try combining the riffs named Ask For More, Give U More and Hey Baby (found in the House library) or even better, sample your own.

Give my regards to Broadway: The MTV studios boast a magnificent vista over Times Square.

that tend to accompany professional samplers and hi-tech musical equipment, you can communicate directly through a medium you already know and love – PlayStation 2.

"I wish it had been out when I was young," muses Morales. "You can enjoy making music without getting too caught up in all the technical aspects which can be very intimidating to people, but the game can open up curiosity to learn about the technical side of things. It's a great tool, you can learn *and* you can have fun. Maybe you can bring kids into music with this game, because not all parents can afford piano lessons. Now there will be kids under ten years old who know how to produce a dance track."

Morales then realises the implications of what he's just said and immediately considers removing the *MTV Music Generator 2* disc from the clutches of his own children before they begin to usurp him in the dance music production stakes.

MAKING MOVES

While Morales has been chosen as the face to front the European version of *MTV Music Generator 2*, it may seem a little strange that this NYC resident was overlooked for the same job on the US version of the game, in favour of evangelistic hip-hop DJ Funkmaster Flex. The man himself, however, has no complaints that his most active fans all reside on the eastern side of the Atlantic Ocean.

"Europe created David Morales," he states emphatically. "I think my sound is an American/European combination. Of course, I grew up with the New York sound, but I was the only DJ playing records coming from the UK and Europe. I would demand to mix European tracks just to get them known in the States."

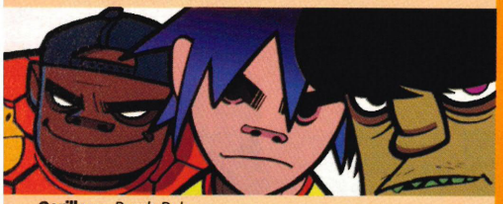
Morales doesn't even have a regular club residency in New York any more, preferring to DJ in the UK. He is full of praise for UK festivals like Homelands and Creamfields which are an extension of the culture of outdoor raves, non-existent in the States.

"In Europe they are always more informed about the people behind the records. Paying lots of money to get a Paul Oakenfold or a Carl Cox to come into town is an alien thing to American promoters."

David Morales only flew back from Switzerland two days ago. Tomorrow he's off to Japan. So how does he find time to work on ideas for that long-awaited *David Morales Presents The Face* album to capitalise on the massive success of *Needin' U*? He gets himself a TV, a PlayStation 2 and a copy of *MTV Music Generator 2* and "kicks it" in his hotel room. In his own words, it's all he needs. □

LOST IN THE MIX

The final version of *MTV Music Generator 2* will feature a number of original tracks from name artists for you to remix in a Morales stylee. Alternatively, you can simply raid the pro tunes for riffs and samples to integrate into your original creations.



Gorillaz – *Dumb Dub*
Exclusive track from Damon Albarn's cartoon chums.

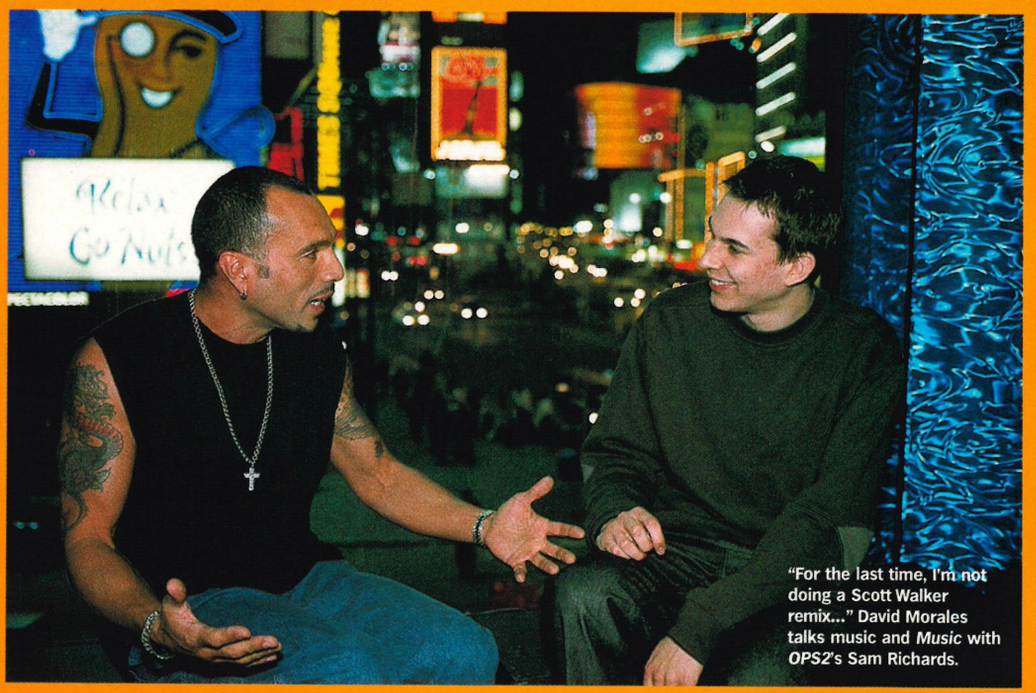
Apollo 440 – *Don't Stop The Rock*
Classic Quo-sampling big beat rompathon.

Bentley Rhythm Ace – *Feelings*
Rare tune from bonkers Brummie beatmasters.

Roni Size – *Jazz 2*
A slice of back to basics drum'n'bass from the Reprazent stable.

Funkmaster Flex – *Come Over/I Don't Care*
Hip-hop megastar DJ turns producer with help from Nelly and The Lox.

Zombie Nation – *Inside The Speaker*
Mutant trance from C64-loving German freaks.



"For the last time, I'm not doing a Scott Walker remix..." David Morales talks music and *Music* with *OPS2*'s Sam Richards.

Can't wait?
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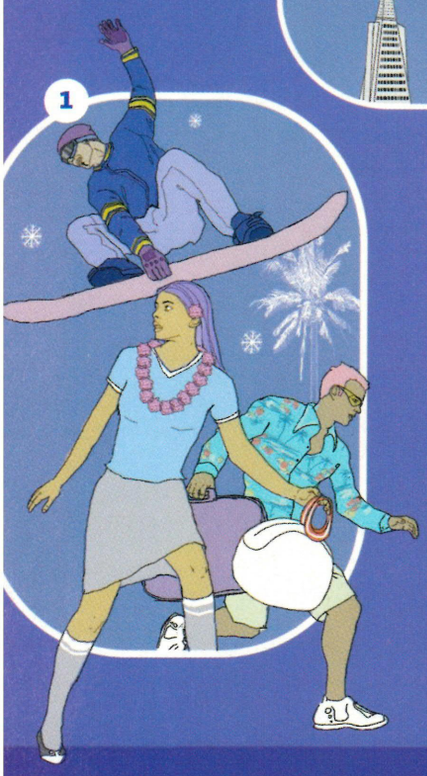
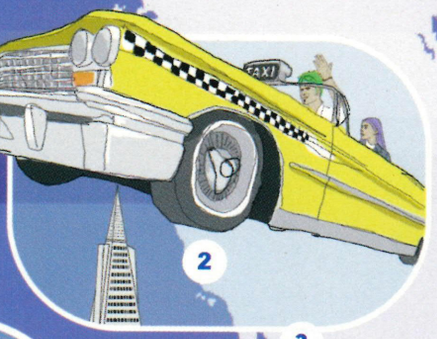
Computer and video games, DVD and movie news, as it happens.

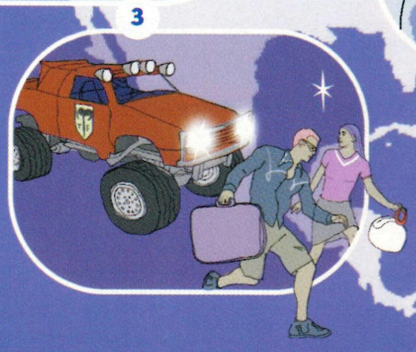
WORDS: SAM RICHARDS/ILLUSTRATION: LEE WOODGATE

HOLIDAYS FROM HELL

Planning a holiday this summer? The brochures may promise sun-bleached beaches, exhilarating adventures and life-changing cultural epiphanies, but behind the travel agent's crocodile smile lies a world of disease, doom and disaster. Now, we're not saying you should shelve plans for that holiday of lifetime in favour of a wet weekend in Bognor Regis, but before you book, take a minute to study our global guide to ensure you're not destined for demise in one of the world's major trouble spots.







1. HAWAII

The land of hula dancing and neon-splattered shirts may seem like the ideal location to get away from it all. Until you realise that a passing iceberg has caused the temperature to plummet, turning Hawaii into a haven for equally neon-splattered *SSX* snowboarders on the Aloha Ice Jam run who'll nosebone your ass as you shiver in nothing but a grass skirt and a smile.

2. SAN FRANCISCO

A flower in your hair won't be much protection against California's *Crazy Taxi* cabbies who'll pocket your fare before leaping over trams, smashing through buildings and crazy drifting along the freeway. If you escape unscathed? Remember to tip 15 per cent. They get all shirty if you don't.

3. MEXICO

Forget those Kerouac fantasies, the Mexico/US border is no place to be an innocent hitcher – you'll find yourself stumbling across the paths of major drug runs. The SUV's from *Smuggler's Run* aren't heading for border patrol and they'll crush backpackers for a laff.

4. NEW YORK CITY

The Empire State, the World Trade Centre, the Statue Of Liberty – all essential sights for the Big Apple visitor, and all rather inconveniently stomped to smithereens by a marauding Metal Gear Ray from *Metal Gear Solid 2* as the Sons Of Liberty run amok. Have a nice day indeed.

5. RIO DE JANEIRO

A pleasant stroll along the Copacabana prom will soon turn sour when you're flattened by a procession of muscle cars in pursuit of *Driver 2*'s dreadlocked thug Alvaro Vasquez. They're chasing him through Chicago, Havana and Vegas too, so best avoid there too.

6. SOUTH GEORGIA ISLAND

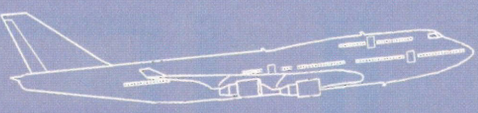
Don't go searching for that isolated island paradise in the South Atlantic. If it happens to the island in *Resident Evil Code: Veronica*, it'll be over-run with flesh-craving undead weirdos, one-armed sucker mutants and transexual tyrants. Just like Ayia Napa.

7. ANTARCTICA

So, fancy yourself as the next Sir Ranulph Fiennes do you? Just don't come crying to us when your faithful huskies are mangled to bits by a genetically-modified purple freak who's waving an Uzi in your face and a gnarled claw at your nether regions. *Extermination*? You said it...

8. MARSEILLE

A trip to la South of France is always an attractive proposition, except when it's invaded by plagues of freestyling skateboarders from *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2* intent on pulling benihanas and Japan airs in your head. Not rad wethinks.



9. LONDON

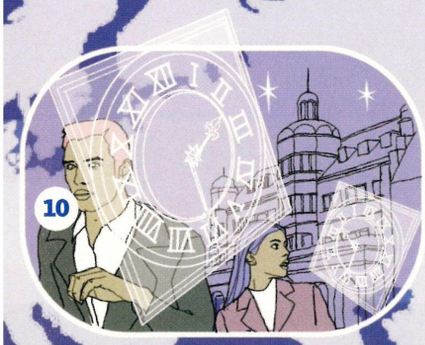
Even a weekend break in Britain's fine capital can prove hazardous these days, thanks to the burgeoning growth of the indigenous gangster community. Expect *The Getaway's* Charlie Jolson to mow you down in his Merc and then call you a slag when you're dead on the pavement.

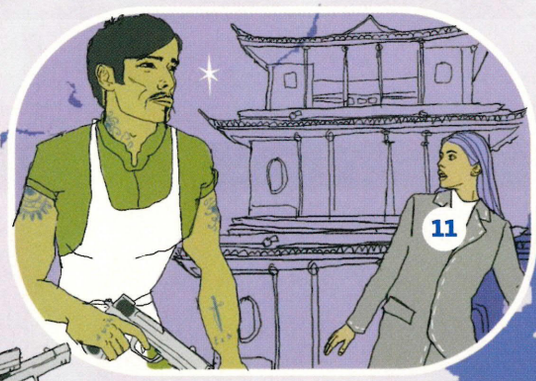
10. HEIDELBURG

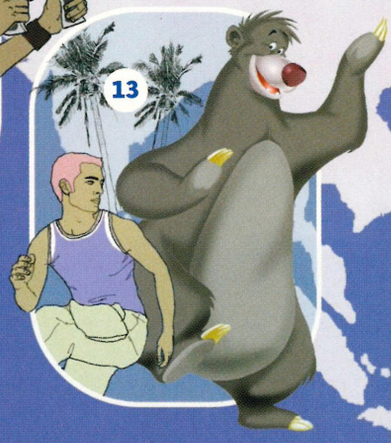
This quaint German castle town might seem like a harmless resort until you realise that it's also known as Lebensbaum, the setting for *Shadow Of Memories*. Before you know it, you'll be getting stabbed in the face by your future self who's just sold their soul to Satan. Charming.

11. BEIJING

Avoid going for a bite to eat in the Chinese capital. As *TimeSplitters* proved, restaurants are populated by trigger-happy Triads in league with legions of time-travelling mutants who can't wait to serve up your corpse with egg fried rice. Stay home and order a takeaway instead.







12. EGYPT

Forget about catching a glimpse of some rare artefacts from the dawn of civilisation at the Giza pyramids – one particular *Tomb Raider's* been there already and cleaned them out. What's more, she's pointing a pair of pistols at your head while swinging past on a bungee rope.

13. INDIA

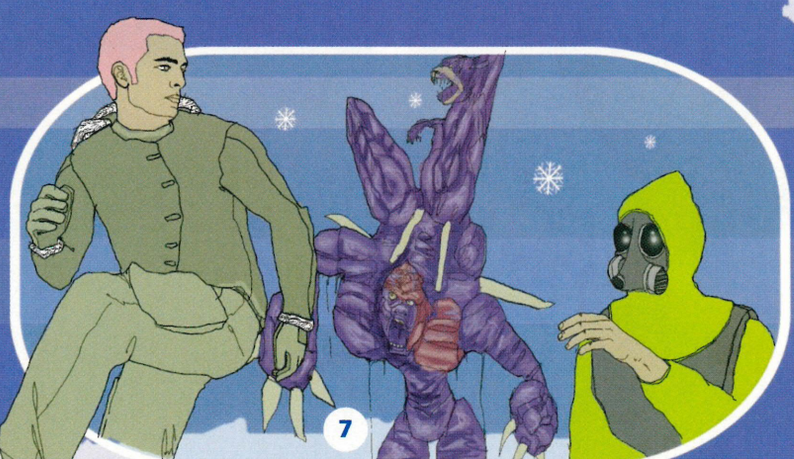
Good luck to anyone planning a jungle expedition in the subcontinent. Far more dangerous than any poisonous snake or fierce tiger is the threat of being frugged to death by Baloo and King Louie from *The Jungle Book Rhythm 'n' Groove*. Not to mention the constant threat of Lou Bega.

14. TOKYO

Any manga fan will know that Tokyo is probably the most dangerous city on the planet, what with scores of aliens, toy robots and Mothra wannabes all laying siege to the city at any one time. Survive the onslaught, and you'll probably be knocked flying by a *Ridge Racer* car speeding through Chiba City at a tarmac-blistering 300kph.

15. AUSTRALIA

Beware when trekking through the bush, the realm of the *Crash Bandicoot*. Although seemingly friendly, this creature's spin attack is deadly, his habitat is littered with crates of explosive TNT and Prof Neo Cortex is probably lurking nearby with a dastardly plot brewing to destroy the Earth. Again.



WAR GA

WORDS: MIKE GOLDSMITH

WWII

It's in films, it's on television and now it's heading to PlayStation 2. Over half a century after VE Day, World War II is everywhere. *OPS2* visits Madrid-based developer Pyro Studios for a look at the ground-breaking *Commandos 2* and then asks the makers of the PS2's WWII titles – is a world war really a subject for videogames?

The kind of detail we can expect from the PS2's WWII games – in this case, Pyro's stunning *Commandos 2*.

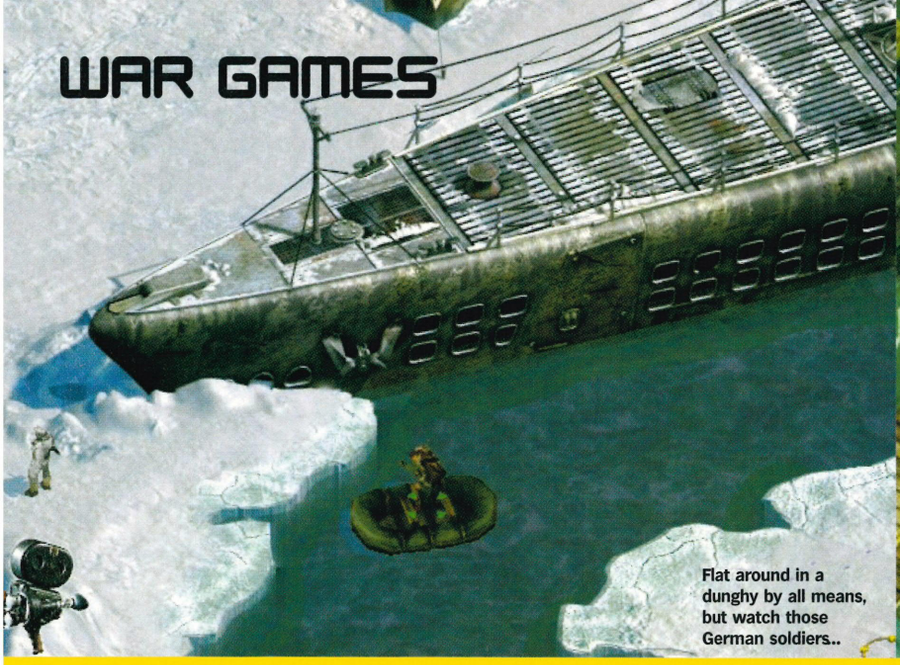
War – it's a big subject. It decimates cities, it frees the oppressed, it destroys families and it unites countries. Whether it's close to home or thousands of miles away, war combines, confuses and influences just about everything – society, politics, history, science, morality. The list is endless and, let's face it, pretty obvious. It's a war – of course, it changes everything.

For all these reasons and more popular culture just loves a war. As Hollywood has shown, wars can be the backdrop for everything from jingoistic tales of daring-do to soul-searching weepies. Given that *Apocalypse Now*, *Go Tell The Spartans*, *The English Patient* and *Escape To Victory* can all be considered war movies proves the point. It's a big subject.

And it's coming to PlayStation 2 – specifically in the form of a series of games set during World War II. As PS2's Emotion Engine gives developers the ability to craft games with the visual and psychological depth of Hollywood's best (and worst), it was almost inevitable that the PlayStation 2 would be flooded with the same WWII subject matter that is heading to the cineplexes this summer. Of course, just as Hollywood focuses on the big budget action-adventure, so will PlayStation 2 – who wants to play a videogame version of *From Here To Eternity*? But with the PS2's improved visual detail, what would once have been a distorted reality on PSone is now a game that can offer pseudo-realistic replications of actual events. It'll actually look like the real thing – and that raises a whole bunch of questions. Emptying a rocket launcher into a *Quake III* monster is all well and 'good' but lobbing a grenade into a huddle of chatting German guards when you could just sneak by?

OPS2 flew to Madrid to see *Commandos 2*, the PS2-bound sequel to the best-selling PC strategy-adventure, and also talked to the makers of forthcoming titles *Prisoner Of War*, *Hidden & Dangerous 2* and the two new *Medal Of Honor* games, *Frontline* and *Fighter Command*.

***The Bridge On The River Kwai, Commandos 2* style. It was actually made out of metal, y'know...**



Flat around in a dunghy by all means, but watch those German soldiers..

See the tiny green 'target' above this caption? That's you underwater, that is.

COMMANDOS 2

Real-time strategy gaming without the mind-numbing tedium? Oh yes. Time to face front with Pyro Studios' *Commandos 2*.

"This mission is based on a movie. Let's see whether you can guess which one it is..."

Dual Shock 2 in hand, Pyro Studios' Jon Beltrán zooms and rotates his in-game camera around a lush 3D world, smiling as he proudly demos his creation to a group of eager journos. Japanese soldiers amble around, jungle greenery surrounds the camp and, as our group of heroes take in their surroundings, water gushes past the wooden posts supporting an extremely familiar bridge.

"Actually this bridge is not the real bridge on the river Kwai," chuckles Beltrán. "The real bridge was made of metal and was never blown up. It's also very ugly, so we took the one from the movie. Let's hope we don't prosecuted. We didn't buy the rights for the movie bridge."

As *OPS2* drinks in the sights of one of the PS2's most promising games, it's obvious Beltrán might have a point – this *is The Bridge On The River Kwai*, in all its doomed glory. The visuals on display are simply stunning, from the detailed weaponry to the steaming jungle to the period clothing to...

Let's back track. Created by Madrid-based Pyro Studios, *Commandos 2* is a real-time strategy game set in World War II featuring a crack squad of soldiers who must complete various rescue missions. The sequel to 1998's best-selling PC original, *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines*, *Commandos 2* is so much more than the usual RTS tedium thanks to its beautifully-detailed backdrops, on-the-fly tactics, emphasis on action and stealth, and fluid animation. Here, characters move around because you move them, not because of a few button clicks and some well-nurtured statistics. And as *OPS2* can now attest, it plays just as well. The sun might be liquifying ice creams outside in the Madrid sunshine, but us? We're on a mission...

If every game has one unique selling point, then *Commandos 2*'s intrinsic appeal is its attention to detail. As Beltrán admits, the game has "two or three things in it that aren't real" but if it was set on Jupiter, it's realism would still be staggering. Each of the game's twelve missions have been modelled to the nth degree, with moss littering the ground around a huge Buddha in India, real blueprints researched to model the Japanese aircraft carrier Shinano ("It was one of the largest aircraft carriers but not one of the most active, as it was blown up before leaving the docks. We have a chance to blow it up again.") and rustic cottages scattered around a Normandy village. The recreation of Paris' Eiffel Tower or La Rochelle, the famous submarine base seen in *Das Boot*, is jaw-dropping as is the Arctic sea mission. Well, almost.

"The walruses will attack the commandos, the Germans or whoever comes around," explains Beltrán, as his squad get ready for a stealthy attack. "We also have penguins. They don't attack, but they will run away and make noise, attracting the Germans' attention. There are no penguins in the Arctic but we really wanted them in. We used our artistic licence..."

It's a level of detail that is more than matched by the accompanying gameplay. Depending on the mission, you control up to eight characters, all

See how the icons for the PS2 version allow you to 'click' between specific actions.

OVER THE TOP?

***Commandos 2* might look amazing but should you really be throwing grenades at someone's grandfather? *OPS2* asks the creators of 2001's series of World War II games what makes them and their games tick.**

COMMANDOS 2

Pyro Studios CEO Ignacio Perez explains why a war game is no less tasteful than a driving game.

How much research have you done?
There has been a lot of research. We used a lot of the research we did for the original game but we have employed people exclusively for this game. In the Normandy mission, there are specific towns and specific combat. We also researched which towns in India had conflict in WWII and what they all looked like.

Have you sacrificed realism for gameplay?
It is necessary sometimes. First thing, this is a game and then it's a realistic world that you 'live' in. But if it's not fun, it doesn't matter how realistic or well-researched it is. The first thing must be for the game to be fun and if you are good at what you do, you can find always ways not to have to sacrifice any of that realism.

But can a game based on a war be 'fun', especially when people who are playing it could have lost their parents or grandparents in the self-same war?
We were conscious of that. The thing is that in many aspects of life, there is drama and making a 'comedy' of that is one way to make it into something you can accept. Many people have lost friends or relatives in traffic accidents but you don't stop making or playing racing games.

Why do you think there's a resurgence of interest in World War II, for both PlayStation 2 and popular culture?
Because it was the first war that was both a global phenomenon and globally documented by film and photography. For example, the one person who knows the least about World War Two will know four times as much as an expert knows about World War One. Where there is knowledge, there is a feeling of 'complicity'. Where there is complicity, there can be a game.

PRISONER OF WAR

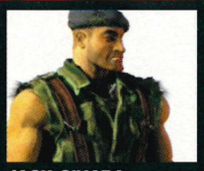
Carl Jones, Executive Producer at Wide Games, on how his game lets you drive Rommel's car...

Realism is obviously key to *Prisoner Of War*. What kind of response have you had to this?
When we started researching *POW* we found that almost every escape attempt that was actually tried in the real life POW camps lent itself perfectly to a fun level in a game. The real escapees were using their ingenuity to come up with incredible escape plans that are so exciting, original and downright incredible, you just want to try them yourself. If we'd have gone for a more hackneyed '*Escape From Cyber Prison 2095*' style product, we wouldn't have come up with any more interesting escape routes than the ones actually executed by real WWII escapees.

How much do you tweak reality for the game's purposes?
Obviously the most important thing in any game is making sure it's fun and playable. If that means we need to use a bit of licence to create more interesting events, then that's what we'll do. For example, in one escape route you can try and steal Rommel's staff car as he's visiting the POW camp. It never really happened (as far as we know) but wouldn't it be great if it did? Ultimately,

RANK AND FILE

To get out of *Commandos 2* alive, you'll need to pick the right man (or woman or dog) for the job. Here's the heroes you'll be controlling.



JACK O'HARA
Nickname: Butcher
Rank: Sergeant
Date of birth: 10/10/09
Place of birth: Dublin, Ireland
Height/Weight: 6'5"/220 pounds
Character: Extremely violent, great initiative, independence
Skills: Expert in close combat and in handling bladed weapons

RENE DUCHAMP
Nickname: Frenchy
Rank: Soldier
Date of birth: 20/11/11
Place of birth: Lyon, France
Height/Weight: 6'4"/179 pounds
Character: Amiable, great at conversation
Skills: Expert in communication and techniques of infiltration and sabotage

THOMAS HANCOCK
Nickname: Fireman
Rank: Soldier
Date of birth: 14/01/11
Place of birth: Liverpool, England
Height/Weight: 6'0"/175 pounds
Character: Outstanding valour, daring and even rash on occasion
Skills: Manufacture of explosives using almost any material

JAMES BLACKWOOD
Nickname: Fins
Rank: Soldier
Date of birth: 03/08/11
Place of birth: Melbourne, Australia
Height/Weight: 6'1"/181 pounds
Character: Dissolute, gambler, loves having a good time
Skills: Very social, and invaluable in naval operations

SAMUEL BROOKLYN
Nickname: Wheels
Rank: Soldier
Date of birth: 04/04/10
Place of birth: Brooklyn, USA
Height/Weight: 6'2"/183 pounds
Character: Very mistrustful of other people
Skills: Wide knowledge of mechanics, plus familiarity with all types of military arms

SIR FRANCIS T WOOKRIDGE
Nickname: Duke
Rank: Soldier
Date of birth: 21/03/09
Place of birth: Sheffield, England
Height/Weight: 6'2"/180 pounds
Character: Cold, calculating and very stand-offish
Skills: Expert marksman, extremely effective

NATASHA NIKOCHEVSKI
Nickname: The Seductress
Rank: Lieutenant
Date of birth: 21/04/12
Place of birth: Kiev, Ukraine
Height/Weight: 5'8"/130 pounds
Character: Cold and calculating, impetuous and overpowering
Skills: Forms relationships with the enemy easily

PAUL TOLEDO
Nickname: Lupin
Rank: Soldier
Date of birth: 01/03/16
Place of birth: Paris, France
Height/Weight: 5'2"/107 pounds
Character: Reserved but loyal, very friendly
Skills: The thief of the bunch. Small and a little burly, his great agility and velocity are exceptional

WHISKEY THE DOG
Nickname: N/A
Rank: Indeterminate
Date of birth: Approximately 1935
Place of birth: Unknown
Height/Weight: 18"/65 pounds
Character: Unswearingly loyal until death
Skills: Strong and fast, can become really fierce. Also very handy carrying a bunch of grenades

we're aiming for *Prisoner Of War* to hit the point at which gameplay and reality converge.

WWII games run the risk of offending people who were either hurt in these conflicts or people who lost family. How do you create a game without insulting people it's based on?
By being respectful and careful. The nice thing about the real-life escapes is that they were carried out using wit and ingenuity to dupe the guards in the camp. Although some POW camps were run by unpleasant, sadistic types, the vast majority were run by honourable Luftwaffe Officers who had earned their stripes in WWI and were not, necessarily, Nazis. We're not looking to demonise the German guards in the camp, nor will we be creating horrific, Japanese-style POW camps. We're also talking to the real people who were involved in escapes from the various camps in the game, to make sure we get the game as authentic as we can – again, without compromising gameplay.

What research have you done for *Prisoner Of War*?
We've visited POW camps, dealt closely with the Imperial War Museum, spoken to actual escapees and of course absorbed the wealth of material available on the subject, in books, films and in documentaries.

Why do you think there's a resurgence of interest in WWII?
It's never gone away. The change has been the ability to realise the setting accurately in films and games. Similarly, games technology is now at the level where we can re-create these epic-style movies on the new platforms – which, of course, is perfect for WWII based games and the fanbase who want them.

Call that a gun?

SWING!
ENTERT@INMENT Media AG

PlayStation.2

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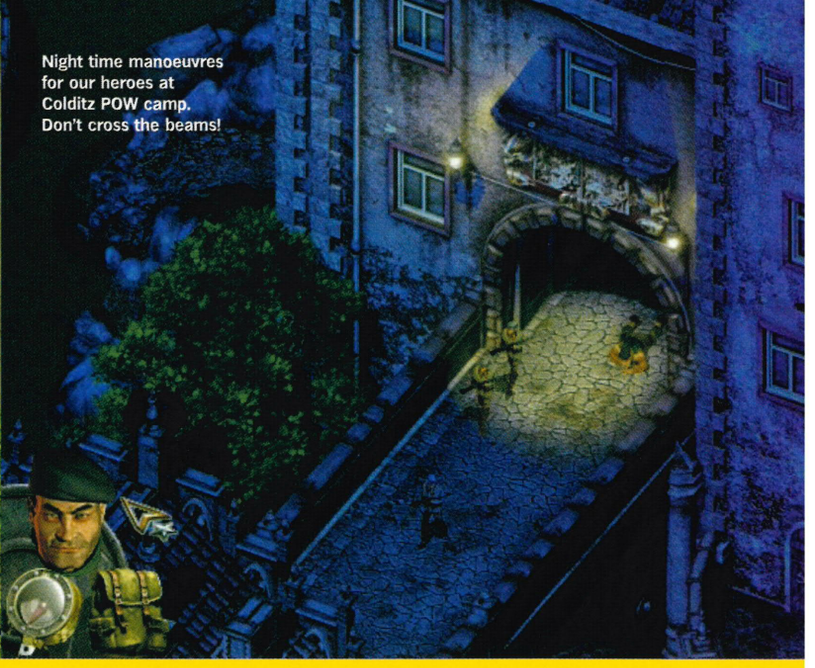
WAR GAMES

As you might've guessed, this isn't the Parisian level... Just look at that detail.



Night time manoeuvres for our heroes at Colditz POW camp. Don't cross the beams!

with differing abilities and skills. Need to crack heads? Use Jack 'Butcher' O'Hara. Require a sniper's skills? Choose 'The Duke', Sir Francis T Wookridge. Of course, you'll start off rescuing most of these characters to progress through the game, but it shows the level of strategic thinking required to win this particular war. There's even a use for man's best friend in this game, as company mascot Whisky sneaks grenades past a group of German soldiers guarding a scale model reproduction of the Colditz prisoner camp.

"Whiskey can't be controlled but he can be called with a whistle," explains Beltrán. "The German guards aren't suspicious and just say, 'Nice dog.' They don't follow him, so he gives the grenades over to the hidden commando which means I can attack."

As Beltrán sets about his explosive entrance to the infamous POW camp, the true depth of *Commandos 2* becomes clear. Rather than just sneaking through windows (revealing cutaway interiors, all of which can be rotated to reveal every nook and cranny) or hoarding weapons and handy items, it's pregnant with possibility. Indeed, every mission can be 'solved' in a myriad of ways. Don't fancy running into a rain of bullets? Pickpocket some German clothes, recruit some resistance fighters and lead the German guards into an ambush. Or perhaps you could sneak into a nearby building, head upstairs and out of a window, and then shimmy silently above them via the telegraph wires. Or turn back and swim around the town. Or steal some shears, snip the barbed wire and tiptoe across the minefield (remembering that mine detector). Or just steal a tank and blow the hell out of everything.

The options are almost infinite and while certain routes are obviously preferable, it proves *Commandos 2* requires brains as much as brawn to succeed. It also requires a bloody powerful system to realise a lush 3D world that can be zoomed in on, zoomed out of, viewed from four different angles and basically put through the ringer. The question hangs in the air – can *Commandos 2* work as well on PS2 as a high-end PC?

"The PS2 is a very comfortable platform to develop for," explains Pyro Studios CEO Ignacio Perez, translated by the able Beltrán. "For the PS2 version, we have changed how the player plays the game but the context, the goals, the environment, the interiors, the textures, the narrative – everything is the same. We have thought of a player who is playing on a 32" TV set from the sofa rather than in front of a PC.

//Realistically-reproduced vehicles come with working suspension and full inertia//

"Instead of using a mouse to control the commandos, I now handle the character with the analogue stick. Again, instead of clicking on a specific weapon every time, you now have a default weapon so that when you have found it, your character shoots with that automatically. Right now, you can play the PC version with a joypad and the PS2 version with a mouse and keyboard, but for the final version, that will not be available. This is a console game. The PC player and the console player have different communication codes, they have learned to play differently. For example, *Silent Scope* is lots of fun in the arcade, but with the PS2 analogue pad is poor. It doesn't give you all the information you need."

Back in gameland, *Commandos 2* does give you all the information – and more. Realistically-reproduced vehicles come with full working suspension and full inertia. Stolen guards clothes will fit tightly on burly commandos but hang loosely off the wirey thieves. When swimming around a Pacific island, passing fish will swarm to you if you feed them, offering up a handy cover to avoid enemy divers (but attract the odd shark).

Where do Pyro go from here? Back to a few more months of late nights and early mornings if the rings around the unshaven Beltrán's eyes are anything to go by. Perez's ultimate goal is to create a single online world based on the *Commandos 2* engine, where console and PC users can "connect and play together in a shared environment". It's a bold claim, but as Perez reveals his favourite war movie is *The Man Who Would Be King*, you'll see for yourself this September that all the foundations are already laid. □

Use the fishes to avoid Japanese divers, but watch out for Jaws over there..

OVER THE TOP?

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS 2

Illusion Softworks Producer Andy Morley, on how his game doesn't deny the past. For more info see p57.

Realism is obviously key to *Hidden & Dangerous 2*.
Realism is a big challenge to achieve in a game. The appeal of real environments and a period in our time that people can relate enhances the player's involvement in the game and enhances the believability of situations within the game. It's also educational. The volume of people who discussed the authentic weapons in *H&D1* was staggering.

How much do you tweak game reality?
The game's characters are fictional as are specific locations in some missions – this is not a WWII simulator. The reality exists in terms of accuracy of models of weapons, equipment and uniforms etc. The goal is to have an immersive game with twists and turns and great gameplay.

Will *Hidden & Dangerous 2* offend people who were either hurt in WWII or people who lost family?
Specifically regarding *H&D* and *H&D2*, I don't believe that it falls into this category at all, bearing in mind that this is interactive entertainment (which will be appropriately age-rated) and is not specifically based on factual people. You can't deny that events took place and it is actually worse if you do. We're not giving people the option to drop the bomb on Hiroshima and as gamers know, even if you play the good guy, you can still lose and the other side wins. Which never happens in films…

Have you worked with any experts, museums etc for realism's sake?
The team has made extensive use of museums and experts in their native Czech Republic as well as visiting museums when abroad. This gives the opportunity to take digital pictures for reference etc. The Internet offers a huge source of material and the original fans of *H&D* have contributed their knowledge via forums.

Why do you think there's a resurgence of interest in WWII?
There are very few events that could be considered as 'epic', for good or bad reasons and regardless of the outcome. WWII, as such, stimulates the imaginations of designers. There's not the over the top feel of the *Unreals* and *Quakes* either. If playing and shot with a bullet, there's more player feedback than being shot with a ray of light.

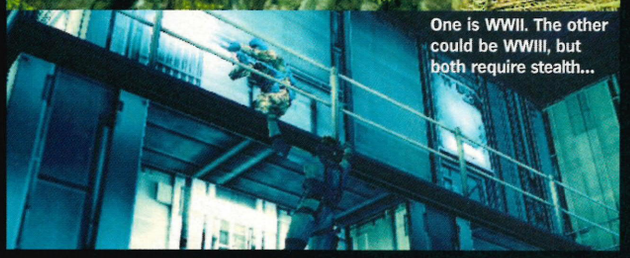
MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE

Sunil Thankamushy, *Medal Of Honor: Frontline* Animation Lead interrogated. More over on p62.

Realism is key to the *Medal of Honor* series. How 'careful' do you have to be?
We're well aware we are producing a form of entertainment. However, the subject matter we treat with a great deal of respect, honouring all that these men and women risked and sacrificed. We believe the best way to do this is through authenticity and real-life scenarios. Reality is a lot scarier than fiction. Also, the many levels of research, field consultants, Smithsonian scholarship, archival footage, and historical written and photographic documentation we utilize

THE METAL GEAR CONNECTION

Commandos 2 **is just about killing German soldiers and blowing up POW camps, right? Wrong. Shhh. Say it quietly. It's a stealth thing and Pyro's Ignacio Perez shows us why...**



One is WWII. The other could be WWIII, but both require stealth...

"I haven't been impressed by anything on PS2 explains Pyro CEO Ignacio Perez, translated by Jon Beltrán. "Except the demo of *Metal Gear Solid 2*. It is fantastic. You can easily see when someone is taking care of a game from behind the scenes..."

It's an understandable admiration given the similarities between Pyro's squad tactics and Kojima's stealth epic. Just as you can finish *Metal Gear Solid 2* by punches, kicks and tranquilliser darts alone, it's possible to play *Commandos 2* as a pacifist rather than a John Wayne wannabe. Yes, the grenades and tanks are tempting but there's also the option to knock guards out and tie them up. So, can you win the war without spilling a drop?

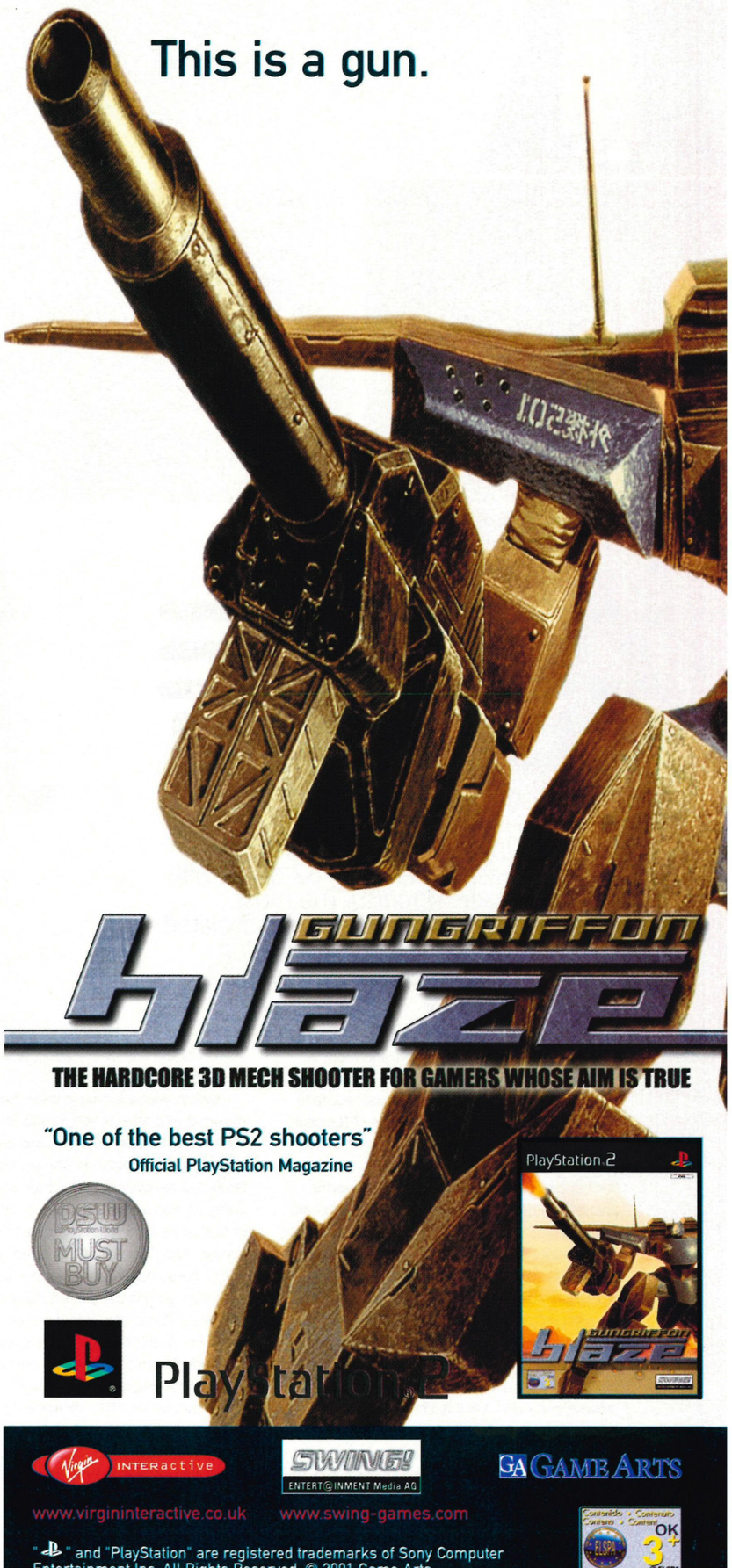
"With one exception, yes," reveals Perez. "You could tie everyone up but one mission is an invasion. None of our testers have been able to finish that mission by just tying people up – yet. But the aim is to give that possibility, and indeed play the game a second time in a different way. If you don't kill anyone, you get a higher score as it's a more intensive battle – and it's nicer."

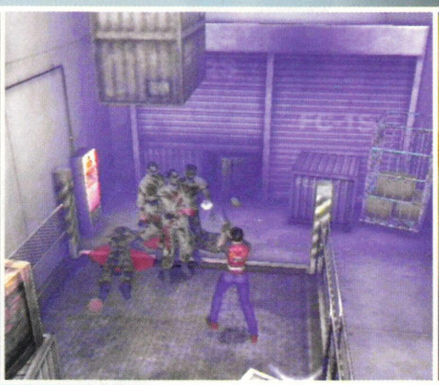
Reaching out for a grenade or sneaking by a guard? It's all up to you...

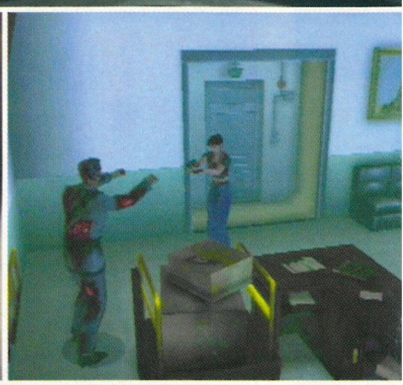
adds legitimacy to the work that we do. One of the greatest pleasures I've had working on this title has been emails from gamers. One young man wrote us that he was so thankful to *Medal of Honor* because through his exposure to the WWII content he began reading and asking questions of his grandfather, spawning numerous discussions and storytelling, and they've become much closer as a result. Stories like that make our day.

How much do you tweak reality?
That's where a bit more fiction comes into play. We always say we're authentic, not accurate. It's in the execution of our adjusted history that we try to be as authentic as possible.

Can you explain your workings with both Capt Dale Dye and the Smithsonian's Russ Lee during development?
Working with Captain Dye is an invaluable experience for the entire creative team. He helps us to develop compelling gameplay and a historically accurate storyline that gives players the opportunity to make the right decisions in a tense situation, where being smart is key and is rewarded. With Dye's contributions as Military Technical Advisor on the game, we're been able to effectively recreate the look and feel of what it was like to be involved in covert operations during World War II. He ensures that the game properly reflects the era, that the weapons used in the game are authentic and perform as they would in real life, that each of the missions has a historical context to them and that the enemy tactics are realistic. He always provides an instant, no-holds barred reality-check concerning infantry procedures. His goal – to keep us real. To keep us from going 'Hollywood'...







Zombies attack in hordes so a battle plan is usually necessary to avoid them chomping on your neck.

WORDS: SAM RICHARDS/STEVE FARAGHER/AMOS WONG

ZOMBIE NATION

Capcom's formidable survival horror series *Resident Evil* is set to make its PS2 debut with a game called *Code: Veronica*. The most extensive iteration yet, Claire Redfield's isolated island quest will chill the soul like nothing before. Those zombies just won't stay dead...

At the end of *Resident Evil 2*, have-a-go heroine Claire Redfield miraculously escaped alive from the ruins of Raccoon City and the nearby Umbrella plant. She had come searching for her brother Chris, a STARS agent reported missing at the time of the first T-Virus outbreak, but emerged from her quest with more questions than answers. Her curiosity led her to Umbrella's Paris HQ where she was captured and imprisoned on an isolated South Atlantic island.

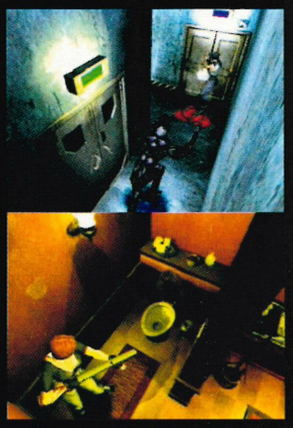
So begins the saga that is *Resident Evil Code: Veronica*, a game that originally appeared on Sega's Dreamcast. However, Capcom decided that such an outstanding title deserved a wider release and *Code: Veronica* has been resurrected for PlayStation 2. What's more, to reward the patience of *Resi* fans who didn't buy a Dreamcast, Capcom has added some brand new scenes to the end of the game, renaming it *Resident Evil Code: Veronica X*.

Unless you've too have been living on a deserted mid-Atlantic isle for the last five years, you'll know that *Resident Evil* has presided over a revolution in videogames. The series' creator Shinji Mikami proved that games were able to terrify as well as entertain. He revived the stock of that most feckless of B-movie foes, the zombie, and placed it at the centre of a gripping tale of corporate conspiracy. He made maze-like adventure games the coolest thing on earth. He had every PSone player in the land craving for green herbs. But that's another story.

Code: Veronica doesn't do anything utterly ground-breaking within the *Resi* mould, but it does harness the PS2's increased graphical clout to enhance the ever-present sense of foreboding. The devil's in the detail, as Claire traipses from industrial complex to eerie mansion to gore-

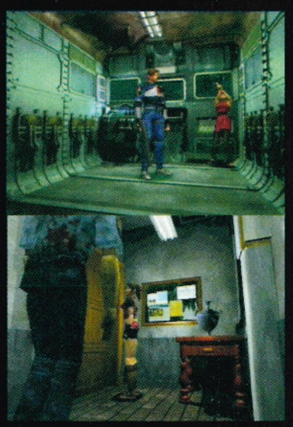
RESIDENT EVIL: A BRIEF HISTORY

A quick glance over the shoulder at the triptych of peerless PSone games preceding *Resident Evil Code: Veronica X*.



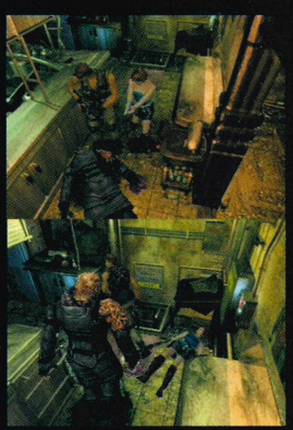
RESIDENT EVIL

UK release: 1996
Major characters: Chris Redfield/Jill Valentine/Albert Wesker/Barry Burton/Rebecca Chambers
Innovation: The first ever 'survival horror' game.
Scariest moment: You're at the bottom of the stairs. You hear a weird 'click-clack' noise. Huh? Ohmigod... It's the knees of a Hunter popping as it stalks you. Aaagh!
Story: Strange happenings in peaceful Raccoon City. People are disappearing. Rumours of 'dog-like' monsters abound. After the remains of a woman are fished out of the river, Raccoon City's special police unit STARS (Special Tactics And Rescue Squad) Alpha team are sent in to the mountain area. When they don't return, the police seal off the area and Bravo team are dropped in by helicopter. Immediately they're attacked by rabid dogs and take shelter in the nearby mansion. It transpires that hideous experiments have taken place here and a virus has been released that turns people into the living dead...



RESIDENT EVIL 2

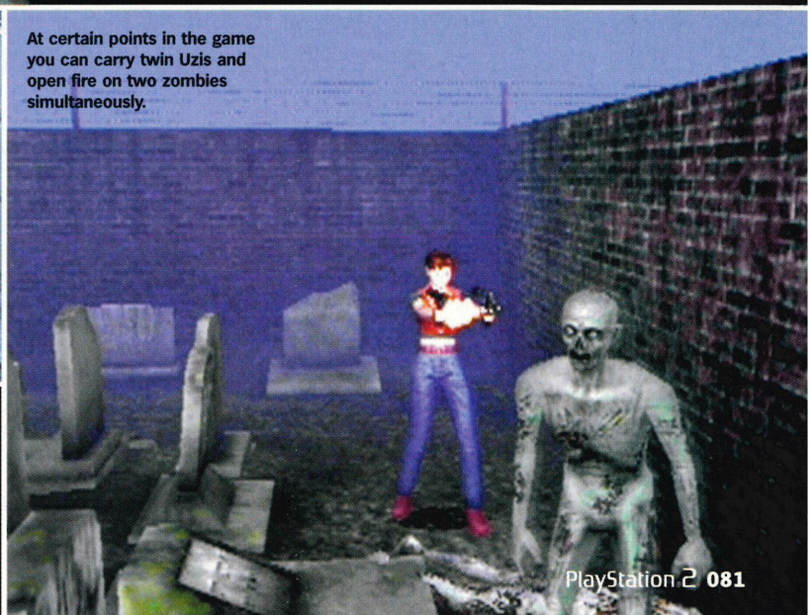
UK release: 1998
Major characters: Leon S Kennedy/Claire Redfield/Ada Wong/Sherry Birkin
Innovation: Better animation, bigger weapons, multiple monsters.
Scariest moment: You're exploring the police station. Something flits across the window. Huh? You turn the corner. Blood is dripping from the ceiling. You look up. Ohmigod... It's a Licker. Aaaaagh!
Story: The virus has spread to Raccoon City. Leon is a rookie cop starting his first day at work, Claire is a 'light-hearted, articulate modern woman' searching for her lost brother (STARS agent Chris from the first game). Both have unexpectedly touched down in the middle of a waking nightmare. Exploring the police station leads them underground, where they must fight their way through the zombie-infested sewers to a secret train station. Trains from here go only one place – up the mountain into the secret laboratory of Umbrella. Can they escape from here with a sample of the G-Virus?



RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS

UK release: 2000
Major characters: Jill Valentine/Carlos Oliveira/Mikhail Victor/Nikolai Ginovaef
Innovation: The dodge
Scariest moment: You're in the church. You hear a noise above you. Huh? You swivel around. Ohmigod... It's Nemesis crashing through the ceiling. Aaaaaaaaagh!
Story: Set in and around the same time period as *Resident Evil 2*, *RE3* drops you into the thick of the action in Raccoon City. You play as Jill Valentine, a STARS member and survivor of the first incident at the mansion. As Jill makes her way through the devastated city trying to understand what has happened, she is stalked by Nemesis, the real reason behind Umbrella's research into the virus. Nemesis is a biological weapon, in this case programmed to seek out and destroy STARS members. In a neat twist, Jill is helped throughout the game by hapless members of Umbrella's clean-up squad who are as much in the dark as she is. Or are they...?

If you're going to find the living dead anywhere, it's in this morbid prison camp.



At certain points in the game you can carry twin Uzis and open fire on two zombies simultaneously.

WESKER'S REPORT

Early purchasers of *Code: Veronica X* in Japan were rewarded with a bonus DVD containing a spoof report by the *Resident Evil* series' über-villain Albert Wesker as well as a strange boozed-up interview with Shinji Mikami and his development team cohorts.

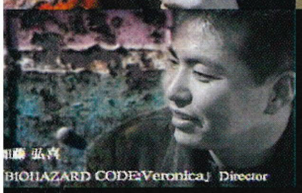
Just what kind of twisted machinations are going on behind those dark glasses?

WESKER'S REPORT

In his article – narrated over *Resi* in-game footage and CG scenes, Albert Wesker says he'd originally aspired to become a leading researcher at Umbrella. However, it was decided that he should be transferred to nearby Raccoon City's police department and as the leader of their elite squad STARS, conducted intelligence activities on Umbrella's behalf.

"I devised my own plans and waited for the right moment to execute them," Wesker says ominously. Under the auspices of a rescue mission, Wesker sacrificed his colleagues as bio-organic weapon combat data for Umbrella (see the original *Resident Evil*). His true intention, however, was to use Umbrella's virus research and samples as a bargaining chip when joining forces with an opposing corporation.

Faking his own death-by-Tyrant and secretly resurrected via the T-virus, Wesker's ambitions were thwarted by Chris and Jill's heroics. Wesker has been, for the most part of the series, a "dead man working in the shadows" – but not for much longer. He reveals he has captured the virus creator's daughter Sherry, who's pendant may hold the secrets of the G-Virus. "Now, anyone or anything in my way will be terminated. STARS must pay!" The stage is set for Wesker's return in *Code: Veronica*.



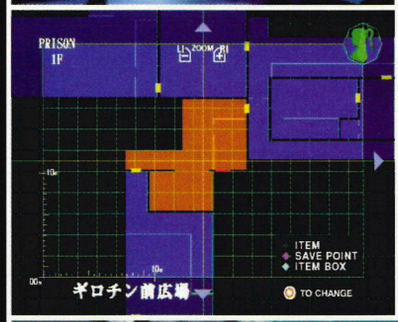
The *Resident Evil* team tuck into the free booze lunch a tad too eagerly.

DIRECTOR'S HAZARD

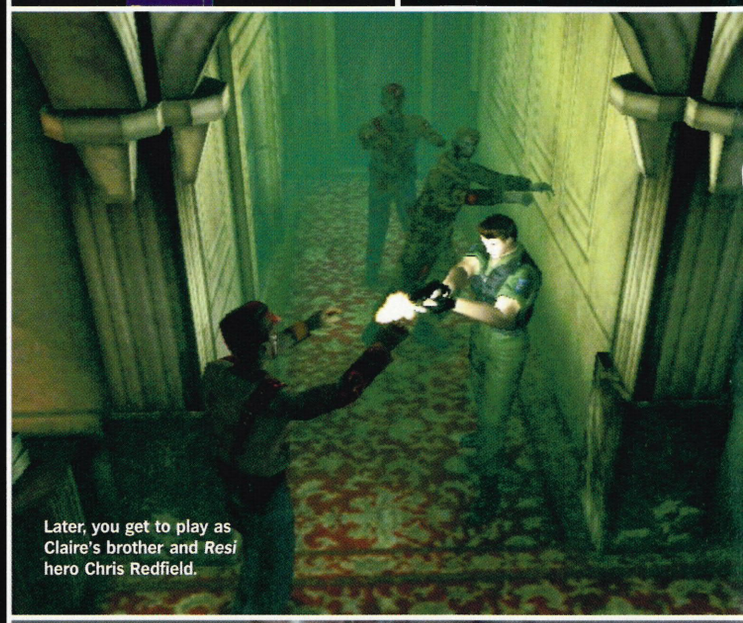
The interview with Shinji Mikami and other Capcom luminaries is filmed at a downtown bar and, fuelled by copious amounts of alcohol, it is indeed almost a director's hazard in the making. *Resi 2* director Hideki Kamiya barely utters a sentence before passing out in an alcoholic haze. Luckily, *Code: Veronica* director Hiroki Sato remains (mostly) coherent.

"The *Code: Veronica* project began after *Resident Evil 2* and it was originally going to be the third game in the series," he slurs. Sega had wanted a *Resident Evil* game of its own for the Saturn, but because of the console's lower spec compared to the PlayStation, the team declined. Obviously things changed with the announcement of the Dreamcast.

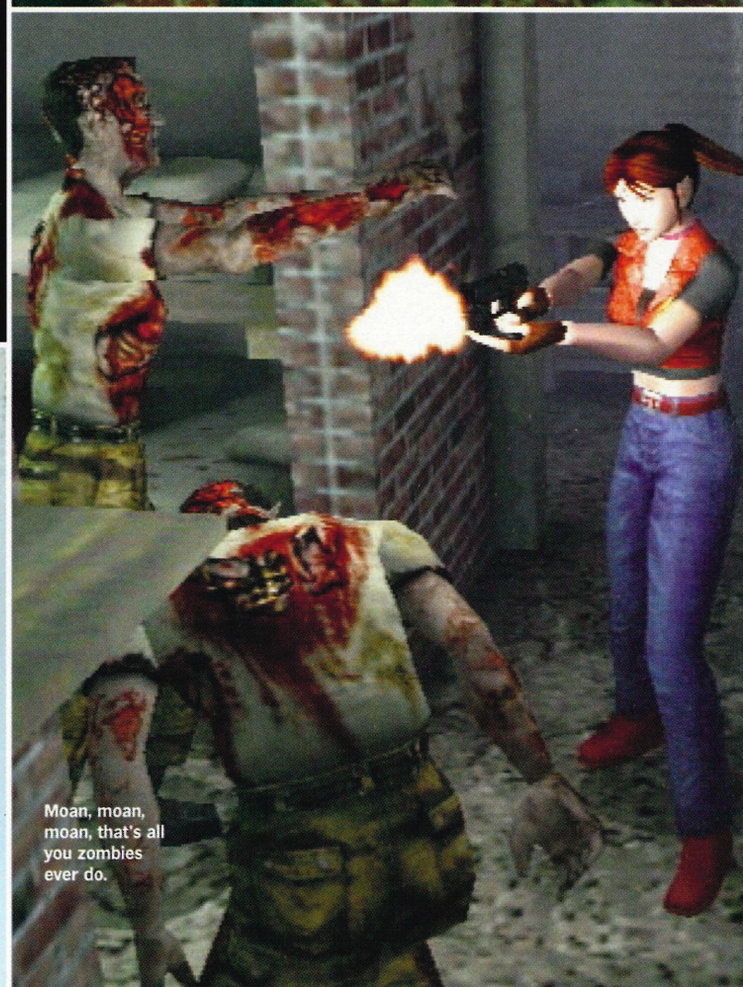
Mikami considers *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* as the equivalent of an indie movie, "I wanted to make it for hardcore fans and name it *Resident Evil 1.9*. It's really a background story after all." Things will be different for next year's *Resident Evil 4*. With no pressurising deadline, Mikami is after something outstanding – "a full model change," as he puts it. "Some early scenes have really impressed me and I haven't felt that way for a long time now."



The game's opening reel shows Claire's capture in Paris.



Later, you get to play as Claire's brother and *Resi* hero Chris Redfield.



Moan, moan, moan, that's all you zombies ever do.

//*Resident Evil*'s creator Shinji Mikami proved that games could terrify as well as entertain//

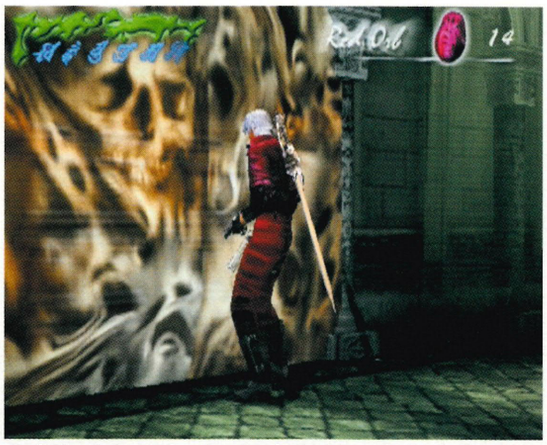
smeared torture chamber, with unpleasant surprises around every corner.

Code: Veronica also appears to be a much more expansive game than any of the PSone efforts. The areas open to you at any one time are vast and you can sometimes feel a little overwhelmed by the task in hand. As well as the colourful cast of mutant marauders whose sole intention is to prolong your progression, the island is patrolled by sinister pantomime villain Alfred Ashford, a man who shares a dubious relationship with his sister Alexia. Yet Ashford isn't actually the game's Mr Big – eventually your adventure will take Claire by plane to a secret military base on Antarctica where a familiar face in the form of Albert Wesker is revealed to be pulling the strings.

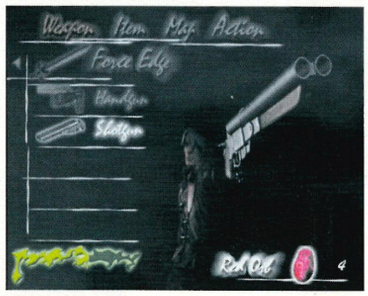
Still, it's the zombies who steal the show with their theatrical moans, dogged persistence and lackadaisical attitude towards personal hygiene. In groups of one of two, they are comical fall guys, but *Code: Veronica* forcefully emphasises the lessons learned in every George A Romero film – that when attacking en masse, zombies are deadly. Just don't come crying to us when a cadaverous combatant comes chewing on your ankle and there isn't a green herb in sight.

**Resident Evil Code: Veronica X will be released by Capcom Eurosoft in September*

These spectral jesters may not be of flesh and blood but they still spurt gore in a satisfying manner when shot.

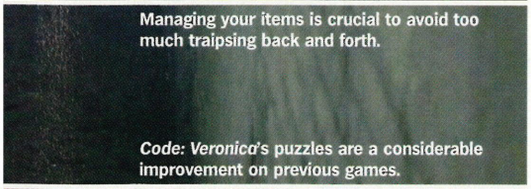


Devil May Cry's novel system requires you to collect red orbs to gain access to previously locked doors.

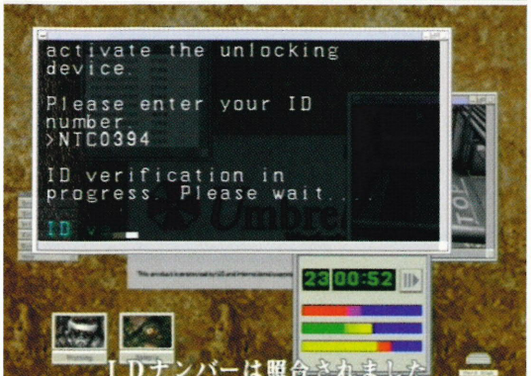


Dante's inferno: our hero can be powered up into an ultra-powerful state to inflict maximum damage.

Managing your items is crucial to avoid too much traipsing back and forth.



Code: Veronica's puzzles are a considerable improvement on previous games.



DEVIL MAY CRY

Just as Konami's *ZOE* came with a demo of *Metal Gear Solid 2*, so *Code: Veronica* came with a bonus disc featuring a level trial from Mikami-san's other horror adventure for PS2 – the demonic *Devil May Cry*. *OPS2* locked and loaded up...

What began development life as a *Resident Evil* game rapidly mutated into something rather different for Shinji Mikami and team. The atmospheric visual stylings of *Code: Veronica* are in evidence, but sister title *Devil May Cry* is all about sword-slashing action and itchy trigger fingers, as the unlimited bullet supply suggests.

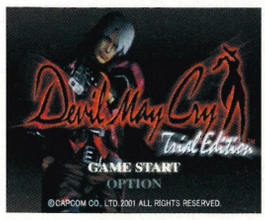
You play as Dante, a medieval warrior chosen for his fearlessness to rid the world of supernatural terrorists, just like his 'father' Sparta 2000 years before. With his platinum feather cut and fetching scarlet cape, Dante is set to become quite an icon. Yet there is something of the demon in Dante himself – whilst battling the enemy he must keep the dark forces that lie within himself in check.

Exploring a breathtakingly-rendered – and seemingly abandoned – gothic cathedral, enemies present themselves in the form of ghoulish apparitions, seeping through the walls or flopping unannounced from the ceiling. *Devil May Cry*'s equivalent of *Resi*'s workaday zombies are the sinister spectral puppets trussed up like court jesters. Thankfully, their nebulous form doesn't make them averse to bullet wounds and it's great fun to amble around blowing the jesters away with a single shotgun blast each.

Rather more formidable are the wailing banshees who wield giant pairs of shears. Get snipped between the blades and it's literally curtains for Dante's luxurious cape. More impressive supernatural beasts present themselves at every stage.

A simplistic implementation of *Resi*'s find-key-open-door puzzles is in evidence, but a neat innovation is the need to collect a certain number of red orbs in order to pass through locked doors. Red orbs are found scattered around arenas or can be won by killing enemies and even by slashing furniture to bits with Dante's mighty blade. Meanwhile, green or blue orbs restore health and power-up Dante's electrifying special moves. The ultimate motivations of Dante's quest are currently obscure, but *Devil May Cry* looks to contain a unique, freaky ambience. □

**Devil May Cry is slated for a Christmas release in the UK. Look out for our* Devil May Cry *feature next issue, containing an exclusive interview with creator Shinji Mikami. Footage soon!*



No news yet on a UK release of this Japanese Trial Edition but rest assured, we're on it...

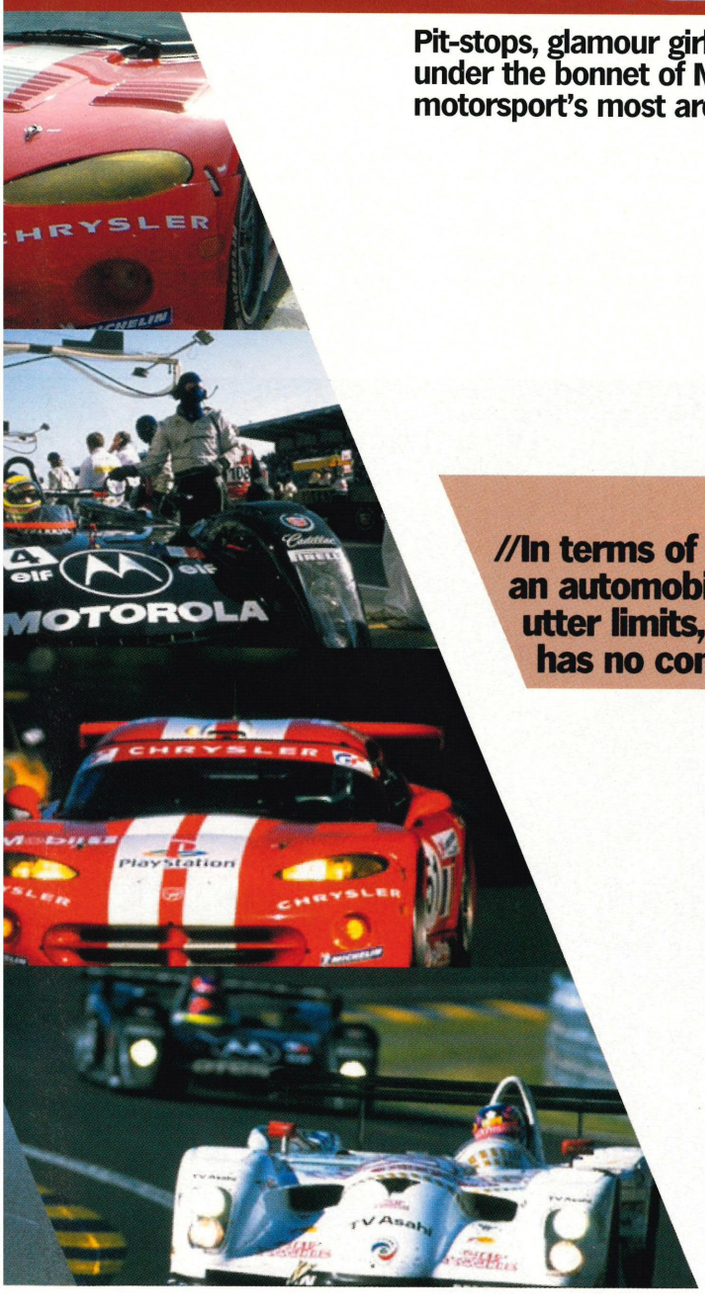
LE MANS 24 HOUR

The Grand Sambuc test circuit plays an important part in Team Oreca's *Le Mans* preparations. All their cars are rigorously put through their paces here at speeds of nearly 300 kmph.

WORDS: MARK WALBANK/PHOTOGRAPHY: INFOGRAMES

A DAY AT THE RACES

Pit-stops, glamour girls and 24 hours in a high powered car. *OPS2* goes under the bonnet of Melbourne House's new *Le Mans* game to see how motorsport's most arduous race is powering its way onto the PS2.



It is a sad indictment of the human condition that glamour is often associated with danger. In a small French town in the region of Sarthe lays a stretch of Tarmac which has been home to some of the most dramatic automobile races in history. Numerous plaques and crosses line the edge of the course indicating where both drivers and spectators have lost their lives since the inception of the race in 1923. Indeed, 1955 saw auto racing's worst accident when Lance Macklin swerved to avoid a Jaguar entering the pit lane. His car slammed into the back of Pierre Levegh's Mercedes, launching it into the grandstand where it burst into flames killing the driver and 80 spectators. Although Mercedes withdrew their cars, the race continued and was eventually won by Mike Hawthorn in the very Jaguar which had unwittingly caused the tragedy.

The determination by the event organisers to go on with the race aptly demonstrates the harsh and dangerous world of the Le Mans 24 Hour Grand Prix. It may not generate the TV coverage of Formula One, but in terms of testing an automobile to its utter limits, the race has no comparison. In videogame terms Formula One has always taken the chequered flag with yearly updates of motor racing's most lucrative franchise. But now, developers Melbourne House are about to bring the rich texture of the Le Mans experience to the PS2.

//In terms of testing an automobile to its utter limits, the race has no comparison//

ALL DAY (AND ALL OF THE NIGHT)

Often overlooked by developers and broadcasters alike, the Le Mans event exists only in snatches of black and white Pathé footage and the occasional news flash in the minds of those with only a passing interest in motorsport. Leather clad men running to their vehicles to the sound of a starting pistol (a tradition which stopped in 1970 due to safety regulations) and, of course, Noel Edmonds weeping as his team's 1996 bid to complete the race ended in abject failure, endure as the only popular images of the occasion.

The Le Mans 24 Hour race was the brain child of George Durand, secretary of the Automobile Club de L'Ouest (AOC). Dissatisfied with the state of motor racing he imagined a bright future for automobile contests. His vision would put manufacturer against manufacturer in a trial, not only of speed, but of reliability. A total of 35 cars from 18 different makers entered the first event and since it was first won by Andre Lagache in a Chenard and Walcker Sport the race has generated greater interest year after year.

The AOC continue to run the event and while the regulations have changed a good deal over time the 'scrutinising' period before the event has remained just as rigorous. In essence, vehicles from four categories can be entered (Prototypes 1 and 2, World Sports and Grand Touring cars) but all must adhere to strict limits on fuel capacity, aerodynamics and modification. It is the race where true GT models can emphatically show their prowess.

Last year Audi swept the board taking the three top positions and are looking just as strong for this season's competition. Le Mans enthusiasts are particularly

looking forward to Volkswagen's entry which will see the return of the mythical Bentley alongside the strong MG team and prototypes from Cadillac and Chrysler.

But anyone familiar with the *Gran Turismo* series on PlayStation will have only one car in mind when they think of high performance vehicles: the Dodge Viper. Arguably the strongest *GT* car in the original game, the vehicle has a legendary reputation and *OPS2* were privileged to see the new Le Mans Viper under construction at one of motor racing's most respected companies, Team Oreca.

FRENCH FANCY

Founded by Hugues de Chaunac, Team Oreca have achieved success in events from the Paris Dakar Rally to the FIA Grand Touring Championship. After winning Le Mans in 1991 with the Mazda 787B and last year's Daytona 24 hour event with the Dodge Viper, Oreca are preparing their assault on what they see as motor racing's most prized trophy. De Chaunac has his sights set on making the Dodge Viper a dominant force at Le Mans over the next three seasons but knows all too well the difficulties of selection. "The biggest problem is to be invited by the committee organisation to come to the race," he explains. "You need to have a very strong team. Last year as well as this year the committee has received around 100 requests to participate – they select only 48. We are entering three cars but this means 114 people, sixty mechanics, twenty engineers and then there's medical people. It is like a small village out there."

Converting the passion of Le Mans to a videogame format is a huge undertaking. Developer Melbourne House examined all areas of a car's preparation for the race with the help of Team Oreca. *OPS2* was given access to Oreca's technical workshop where all the vital research and development is conducted. Dispel any notions that garages are dirty places – as the images testify, the evolution of a Le Mans car is managed within an environment more akin to a science lab than an auto fitting shop. It is here where everything from gearbox tuning to suspension evolution takes place – inside information which the developers have used to their advantage during the PS2 game's construction.

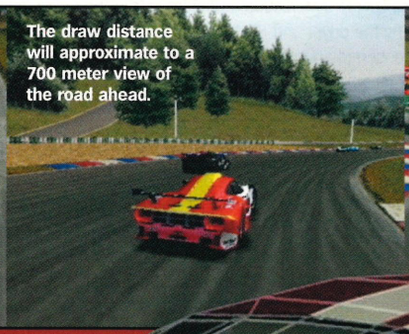
OPS2 was given the chance to take a spin in the Dodge Viper itself – driven by the Oreca's best driver, Olivier Beretta. The Grand Sambuc course lays just a few miles away from the team's secluded headquarters and is utilised for year round testing. Berretta readied the car for action with the warning, "Ask questions later because you won't be able to speak once the car gets moving." It proved to be sage advice from the two times winner of Le Mans. A few seat belt straps later and with little preamble, the examination of how a Dodge Viper actually feels in person is under way. The first experience of the ride sets the tone as we are rudely slammed back into our seats by sheer speed of acceleration. The potency of the Viper is demonstrated all too disquietingly with every gear shift and cornering manoeuvre. A 300 kmph straight heading into the tight first chicane really proves the car's road holding capabilities as the downforce and the car's own inimitable stability display the thrust of a supercar and its driver in complete harmony.

RUMBLE RACING

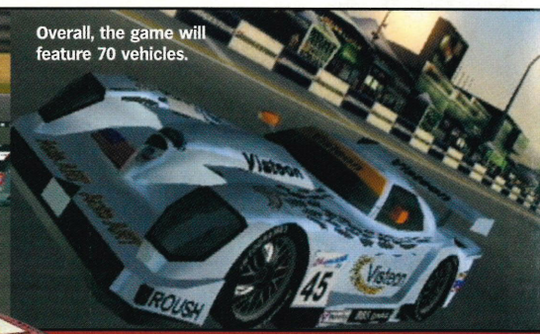
It is an experience which makes the contrast between videogame simulation and the real thing all too stark. With the car so low to the ground, the vehicle amplifies all the nuances of surface fabric. Every bump and undulation on the track is emphasised to an alarming degree. It is not that the ride is particularly uncomfortable just that these subtleties are often poorly conveyed in videogame form. While *Gran Turismo* made a valiant effort at conveying dips in the course, a videogame naturally has to balance accuracy with playability. Implementing the shakes and bumps as a vehicle powers its way around a digital track could be done relatively convincingly but one wonders if the accompanying disturbance of viewpoint through the windscreen would annoy gamers rather than seduce them?

//We've even implemented fuel usage. Aerodynamics, drag, it's all there...//

It has been Melbourne House's task to capture all the bustle and drama of Le Mans in its forthcoming title due for release in June. *Le Mans 24 Hour* was impressive on the Dreamcast and arguably boasted the longest draw distance seen in a driving simulation. For the PlayStation 2 iteration, the developer wanted to improve the title in several areas as Lead Programmer, Dick Hunton explains, "We have gone to great lengths to make an exciting and accessible game," he enthuses. "Small touches will really make a difference. We have implemented fuel usage and cars will get lighter so they will never handle the same. Aerodynamics, drag – its all in there."



The draw distance will approximate to a 700 meter view of the road ahead.



Overall, the game will feature 70 vehicles.

The Dodge Viper, here modelled in minute detail for the game.

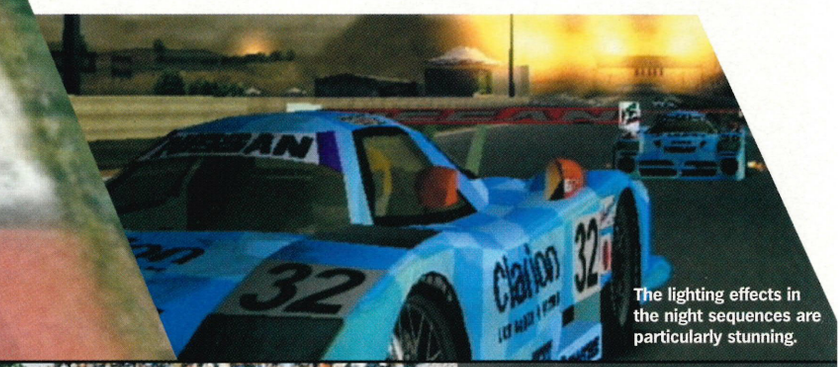
Dynamic weather effects will be included in the complete game.

Thirty new car models will also be added, bringing the total up to an impressive 70. A rear view mirror is now included to help guide the players with their blocking manoeuvres and opponents AI has been tweaked to make them more individualistic. Furthermore, a new course, Road Atlanta (both short and long) has been added for good measure.

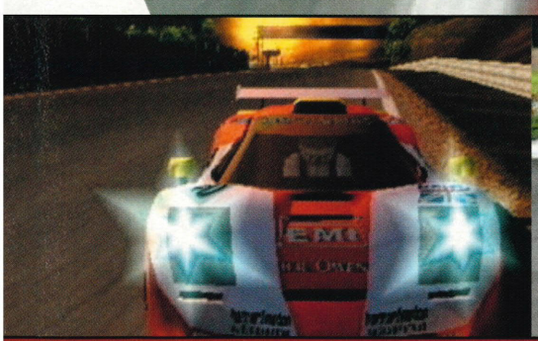
Visually too, *Le Mans 24 Hour* is looking sumptuous. Looking at the tracks from the game – all in playable form – one can understand why. A great level of detail is being streamed out of the PlayStation 2's 4Mb of VRAM. Each course has been driven around by the developers to get accurate video footage which has later been painstakingly reproduced in the game. A full 12 circuits from official Le Mans courses around the world are now included.

OPS2's guide through the process of porting a real-life experience into videogame form is a revelation. That Melbourne House's game has been a labour of love can be seen in every detail from the car physics to the individual handling characteristics. Dynamic weather effects, many unlockable features and a two-player split-screen mode should also ensure the title's success. It may not be better than the real thing, but one of the PS2s first true simulation games is sure to come as close as ever before.

Oh, and there's good news for those who want a challenge bordering on the obsessive. The full insomnia-inducing 24 Hour mode will be available to play in the game – an option sure to test any driving game fan's hardcore credentials. A day at the races? *Le Mans 24 Hour* is all that and more... □



The lighting effects in the night sequences are particularly stunning.

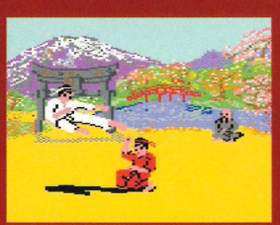


AUSSIE RULES

Melbourne House has a long and venerable history in videogames. First established as Beam Software back in 1980, it has since been consumed by the all powerful Infogrames label and is now known as Infogrames Melbourne House. *OPS2* steps back in time and takes a look at some of its more well known titles.

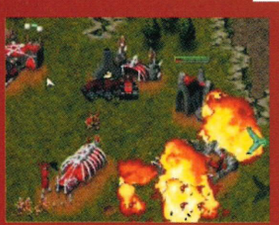
THE HOBBIT (1982)
Originally released for the Spectrum and C64, this mammoth text adventure was one of the first to use lavish images to accompany the input interface.

HORACE GOES SKIING (1982)
Fondly remembered by retro heads, Horace was one of the first recognisable game characters and he starred in several more adventures.



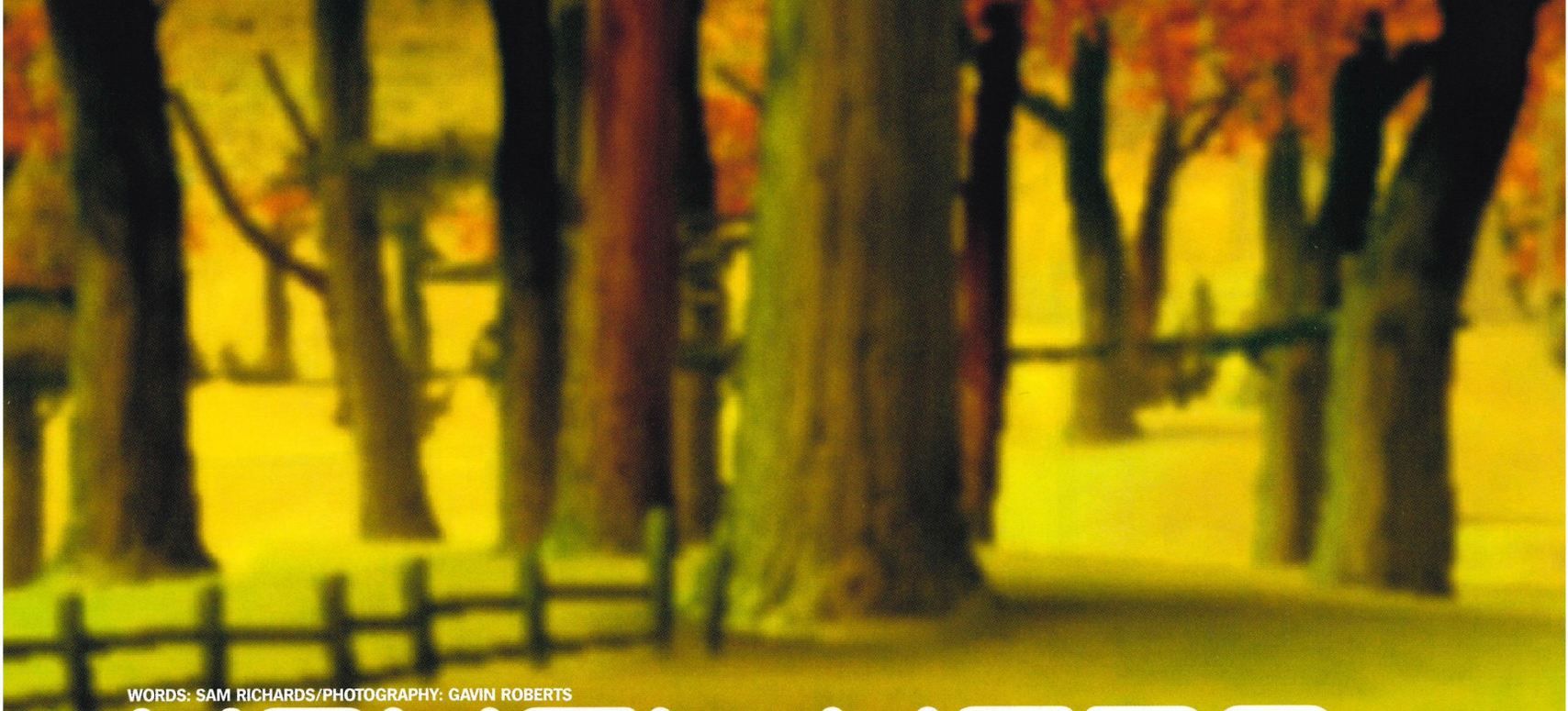
THE WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST (1985)
The first computer game to use a one-on-one combat system which has since been copied by everything from *Tekken* to *Virtua Fighter*.

SUPER SMASH TV (1992)
The SNES conversion of the popular coin-op was one of the best, combining all-round violent mayhem with wonderful power boosts. Who could forget Mr Shrapnel?



KRUSH, KILL 'N' DESTROY (1997)
Although it was a blatant *Command & Conquer* clone *KKND*'s multiplayer brought something unexpectedly fresh to an established genre.

Core has attempted to maintain the watercolour feel of its original sketches in the finished product for a truly original look.



WORDS: SAM RICHARDS/PHOTOGRAPHY: GAVIN ROBERTS

YOKEL HERO

Rustic charm is a quality rarely associated with PlayStation 2 games. Can the idyllic, pastoral setting of *Herdy Gerdy* really compete with the dark horizons and realistic cityscapes of more typical PS2 product? *OPS2* chats with a quietly confident development team at Core Design.

Having just reverse-boosted a lightspeed fighter craft through an asteroid belt while blasting a chrome-shredding acid ray at an enemy ship with a hi-octane techno riff soundtrack exploding in your eardrums, you might wonder exactly where a game about a poor shepherd boy called Gerdy wedges itself into the PS2 equation. We constantly call for originality in videogames, but when it arrives, we all get a little bit nervous.

The reason that games involving beating your opponent to a finish line before shooting them full of lead and perhaps playing football on their grave are so prevalent is that they provide fantastical, fast-action thrills. Games involving road sweeping, gardening or sheep herding don't quite seem to have that same manic charge of adrenaline-pumping potential, and yet the latter activity is in the process of being converted, rather magnificently, into videogame form by Core Design.

Yes, *Herdy Gerdy* is set in wide-open rural landscapes. Yes, your playable character is a shepherd boy scallywag. Yes, you progress by herding flocks of animals into pens. And, yes, this all comes as a breath of fresh country air to the smog-choked gaming scene.

It may seem a little ironic that a game of such risk-taking originality is emerging from the same development house that owes its recent fortunes to annual iterations of the *Tomb Raider* franchise. Yet once upon a time, Lara herself – originally conceived as a female character set in a man's, man's world – was a risk. Core Design wants to put itself back on the perceived front line of gaming innovation and *Herdy Gerdy* could be the game to do just that.

The initial reaction of Core boss Jeremy Heath-Smith to the original pitch from the ideas team is telling. "I said to them, 'you're obviously smoking something, have the afternoon off, because you're completely barking mad!'," recalls Heath-Smith. However, after seeing some of the initial sketches, and realising the intensity of the team's evangelical fervour for this unusual project, Heath-Smith was completely sold.

ONE MAN AND HIS DOOPS

"I first had the idea back in the days of the Amiga," explains team leader Chris Long, one of Core's longest-serving programmers. "It's just taken a long time to reach fruition. I've had to wait for the technology to improve sufficiently in order to have a system on which I

New versions of the original *Herdy Gerdy* sketches that sat in Chris Long's cupboard while he waited for PlayStation 2 to come along.

Revealed! The angular mesh cleverly disguised beneath *Herdy Gerdy*'s soft contours.

Bells litter the levels like Sonic's rings. You can collect them all for additional bonuses.

Producer Clint Nembhard (left) and team leader Chris Long prefer to get hands-on and keep the development team small.

It seems PlayStation 2 was *that* system. At the end of his last PSone project (the underachieving platforming adventure *Swagman*, Long admits with a reluctant smile) Chris Long took the strong visual ideas created by his then lead artist and investigated the possibility of introducing them to some truly ground-breaking gameplay. Could Long get a group of 3D animated creatures to behave like a flock in the setting of a videogame? He could, and a herding game was born.

Long is now able to show off the flock behaviour of the doops, the creatures on the lowest rung of *Herdy Gerdy*'s evolutionary ladder. Cute and dumb, a doop looks like a cross between a rabbit, a squirrel and a Yorkshire terrier. In the way that doops flock together, they're very much like sheep. By moving Gerdy around the back of a flock like a sheepdog, you can usher doops into their pen. Run too hard at the flock, and it splits in two. Allow any of the game's larger creatures anywhere near the doops and it's a recipe for chaos.

The essence lies not only in the way that your control of Gerdy can manipulate a group of creatures, but in the way *Herdy Gerdy*'s 20 different species interact with each other. Just as in a real ecosystem, this interaction isn't necessarily beneficial to Gerdy's herding task. Smaller creatures are viewed simply as food by the larger, carnivorous beasts such as the gromps. However, gromps will also fight amongst themselves and are scared of water, so there is always a path to safety from their gluttonous clutches, even if it means wet feet for young Gerdy. Meanwhile, the cheeky grimps will do their best to provoke the gromps, and while this may initially be a source of untold frustration, you can begin to use the various individual creature characteristics to your best advantage.

As Gerdy progresses throughout the adventure, he will collect certain useful herding tools including a stick, a horn and a flute. Some creatures will only respond to these tools, complicating Gerdy's task still further. In one later level, Gerdy is required to herd a plague of rat-like glooters John Wayne-style right outta town. The glooters will only follow Gerdy while he's playing a tune on his flute, but you also have to be careful not to alert the attention of the town guards with your woodwind ditties in the Hamlin-esque process.

Gerdy's herding adventures are linked together by a story line that allows the development team to incorporate elements of adventure gaming. His mission is to win his home island's national herding championship by rounding up a series of different creatures from various remote parts of the country. There is a distinct progression from the calm lowland meadows of the game's beginnings to the dusty plateaux and wintry peaks of later levels, to be reflected in the increasing maturity of Gerdy's character.

Cut-scenes have been implemented to propel the story onwards, as a range of eccentric characters and creatures appear to help (or hinder) Gerdy's quest. In some cases, a cut-scene will prompt a departure from the typical gameplay model as Gerdy is required to complete a herding task within a time limit to win an essential item from a fellow herder.

"There is a strong adventure storyline that involves character development," explains Producer Clint Nembhard. "We considered it important that you met certain key characters at regular intervals on the journey, and that your views on those characters could change, say from suspicion to friendship. Gerdy's character changes too. At the beginning he's cocky but naive, and he grows wiser with experience."

A couple of cut-scene animations are already in place and look to contain a great sense of lively humour. Their quality was ratified when *OPS2* confused one of *Herdy Gerdy*'s own with an out-take from *A Bug's Life*. The fact that the development team contains animators formerly of Cosgrove Hall (cult hero *Danger Mouse*) and Warner Bros' noted *The Iron Giant* team underlines Long's commitment to a determined visual style. "We've got several animators who are all working on different creatures in order that each creature will be imbued with the personality of its creator," he says. "This gets interesting when it comes to the cut-scenes because when two characters interact, their dialogue comes very naturally from having two distinct voices."

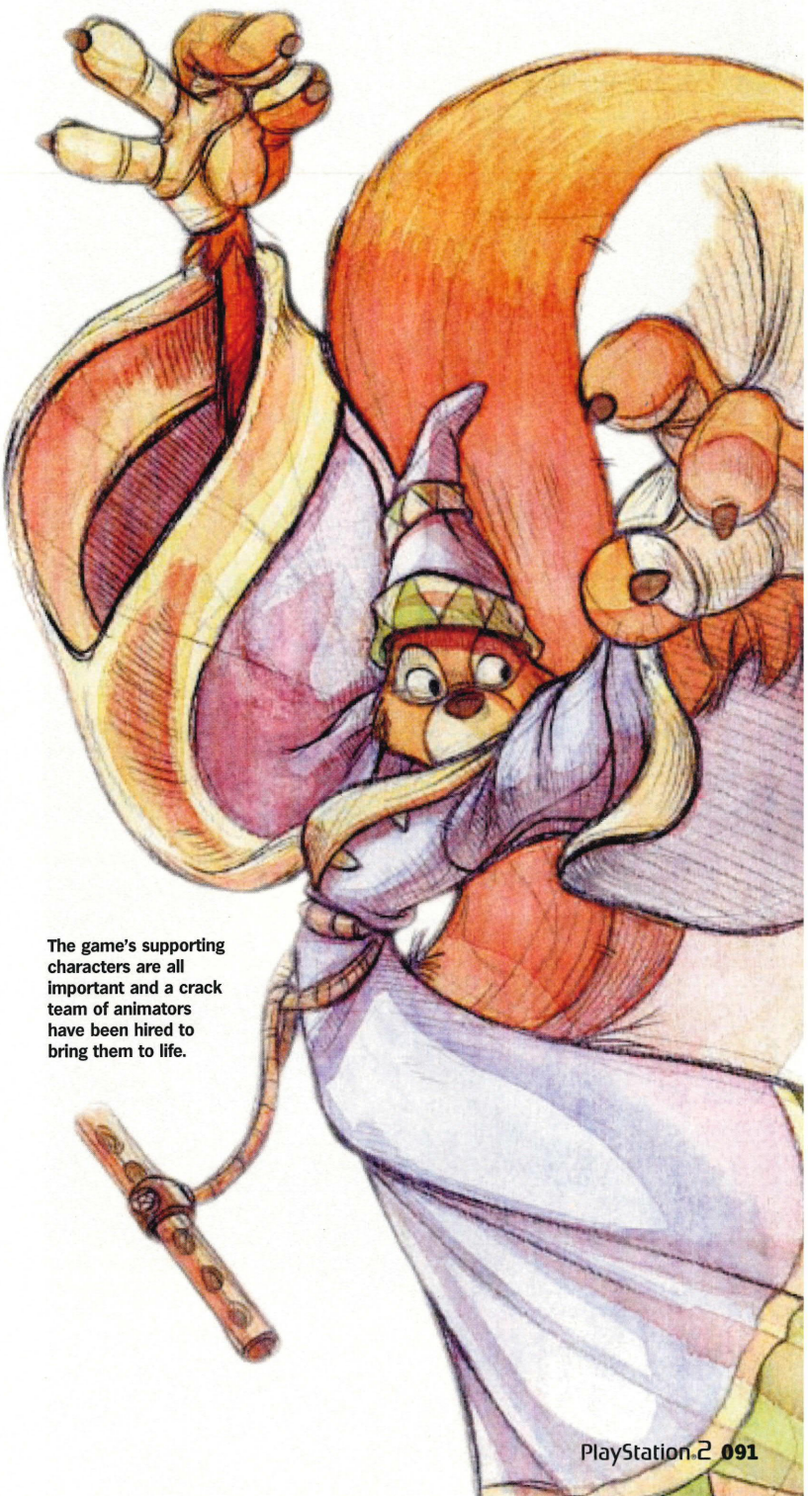
COUNTRY CHARM

Even without the animations in place, *Herdy Gerdy*'s appearance is striking. The rural landscape's contours lend the game a storybook feel. "Our original idea was to create the backgrounds in such a way that they looked like painted scenery," explains Long.

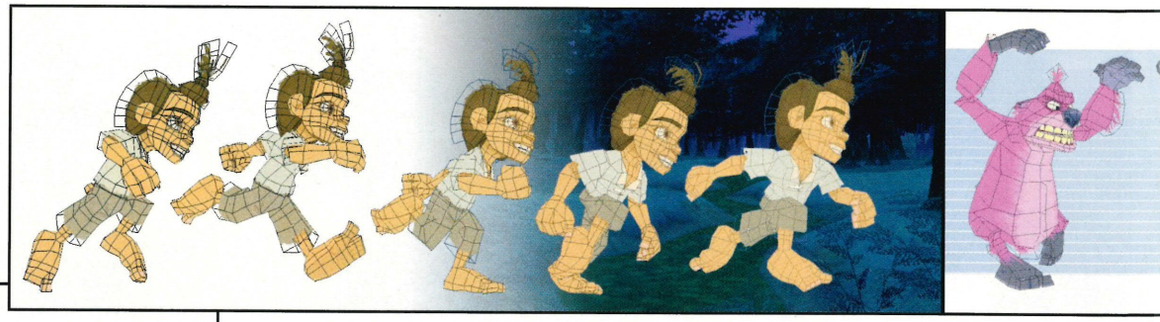
On one of the graphics workstations, he presses a key to reveal that the smooth, rolling landscape still lies on a mesh of distinctly angular polygons. "It's been a long hard process, because the look we're trying to achieve isn't natural to a computer. It's not a problem if you're building a spaceship, because a computer gives you polygons and hard edges, which is exactly what you need. We're trying to create an organic look, so that when you scan the screen you don't actually see any polygons or straight lines at all."

It looks as though the development team are close to achieving their goal of a thoroughly

//"When you scan the screen you don't see any straight edges at all." Team leader Chris Long//

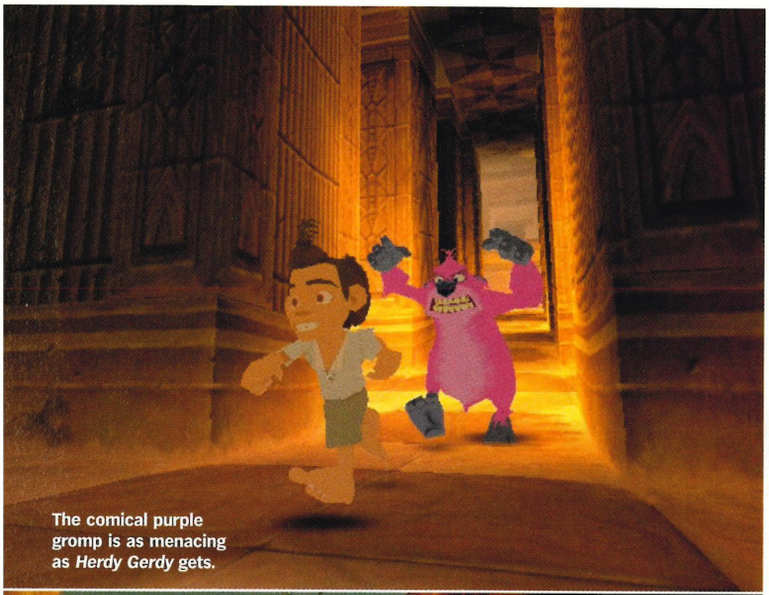


The game's supporting characters are all important and a crack team of animators have been hired to bring them to life.



The animation of Gerdy and the game's other characters and creatures is central to the cartoonish nature.

//Gromps are scared of water so there is always a path to safety from their gluttonous clutches//



The comical purple gromp is as menacing as *Herdy Gerdy* gets.

natural environment, aided by the library of 1200 hand-drawn textures they've created. What's more, for the most part they aren't building background scenery, but a fully 3D environment for Gerdy to explore. It's necessary for each level to have a boundary, but the team have striven to avoid unnatural impositions on Gerdy's world. The level limits will instead be defined by a high fence, a steep cliff or an impassable body of water.

"We don't want to mislead the player," Nembhard emphasises. "If you can see an area, most likely you can go there. You'll know automatically when reaching the edge of a level."

Given that the levels are so large, there will be a number of possible ways in which to herd all the required animals at each stage. "It's very freeform," admits Nembhard. "There are a variety of routes through and even between levels."

EWE KNOW IT MAKES SENSE...

An obvious criticism to level from a concept point of view would be *Herdy Gerdy*'s apparent positioning at the younger end of the market. We are talking cute, cuddly creatures and unthreatening pastoral landscapes, after all. As much as we can appreciate the breaking of the action game mould, PS2 owners don't want to play a kids' game.

Long is mindful of this potential turn-off. "*Herdy Gerdy* is very different to anything that's out there for PS2 at the moment, and that's not a bad thing. We're aware of the fact that people might see it as a young person's game, but I think that the *Itchy And Scratchy*-style humour will counterbalance that.

"*Toy Story* and *The Simpsons* are great examples of adult-appealing animation because they work on two levels. It's a difficult balance, but it can be done." Long suggests that appreciation of such universally-appealing animated humour is actually more adult than reliance purely on action and violence. He's probably right.

It's significant here too that Long prefers to cite cartoon animations as opposed to videogames for inspiration. It's difficult to trace *Herdy Gerdy*'s stylistic lineage in terms of games and Long deliberately plays down the obvious comparisons with the works of Shigeru Miyamoto (legendary designer of Nintendo's *Donkey Kong*, *Mario* and *Zelda* – *Herdy*'s most obvious progenitors). A quick look at the way young Gerdy runs in wide-eyed mock terror from the deeply comic gromp creature proves that the team's animators have indeed been studying their Disney back catalogue.

"We've toned down the contrast in the colours that you typically get in what people call cartoon-style games, *Mario* or *Zelda* for instance," Long points out. "In an animated Disney film you don't get that contrast, they create an overall palette. So we have created a softer display than in most videogames. We haven't dressed our main character in bright colours, so he's very much part of the scene."

Long is determined to resist prevailing videogame trends. "If you study other games too closely you're in danger of ending up with a derivative product" he says. "These days, you'll see an interesting effect in one game and then six months later it's in every game on the shelves. We're trying to find our own way of doing things. As soon as you start listing influences people tend to pigeonhole your creation in one specific genre of game. We want to avoid that whole thing, we want to be unique."

Coming from the old school of game creators Long cut his teeth in an era where one or two programmers could create an entire game by themselves. Even now, he's attempted to restrict the size of the *Herdy Gerdy* development team (currently 14-strong) in order to maintain focus. So, then. Have the encroaching corporate demands of the videogame industry over the last decade had an effect on creativity and originality?

"There's an awful lot of driving games or first-person-shooters out there for the PlayStation 2. You do see a few good original concepts from time to time, but I think a lot of the artistic impetus has gone out of videogames. Years ago, making a videogame used to be more of an individual effort but today you can't do that. There has to be a larger team, and I don't know if that dilutes the originality of a game idea or not. You have to take control and make sure that everyone working on the project understands your vision so it doesn't go off in some other direction."

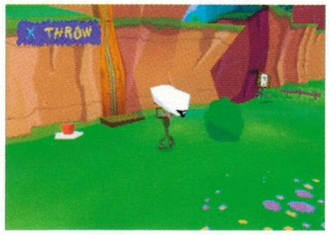
Long shouldn't worry. On current evidence, *Herdy Gerdy* is probably the most original game on the PlayStation 2 release schedule, but if all goes to plan, it won't sacrifice intuitive gameplay for novelty appeal. The game's creatures are instantly loveable, even to the most hardened war game devotee, and its mellow-hued, rustic environments are designed to soothe the savage *Quake*-fed beast.

Come the eventual October release, we should all be rounding up flocks of fluffy animals into wooden pens as naturally as we would otherwise administer a flying death fist combo to an advancing muscle-bound foe. Sit back, relax and steel yourself for *Herdy Gerdy*'s quiet revolution. □

COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE

You may not be able to gain access to vast swathes of the British countryside at the moment, but luckily you can turn to your trusty videogame console for a taste of life down on the farm. Although the monopoly on digital shepherding doen't end there..

SHEEP (Mind's Eye/Empire, PSone)
☐ Can quite possibly lay claim to being the world's first sheep herding videogame. Its retro top-down perspective puts it way behind *Herdy Gerdy* in terms of visual appeal, but *Sheep's* flock mechanics are spot-on. Manipulating your herd around a cartoonish maze while avoiding lamb chop for lunch is the key to mutton the most of it.



SHEEP, DOG 'N' WOLF
(Infogrames/Infogrames, PSone)
☐ The roles are reversed in this excellent Looney Tunes licensed stealth-puzzler. You play the wolf (Wile E Coyote's cousin, Ralph) and the aim is to lure sheep away from their farmyard haven for your own nefarious purposes. Cartoon capers of the most chortlesome variety ensue.

HARVEST MOON: BACK TO NATURE
(Natsume/Crave, PSone)
☐ Herding (or stealing) sheep is one thing, but if you want the whole corn-chewing deal, this is the only game for you. In this distinctly bizarre Japanese RPG/strategy title, you take charge of the whole farm and with the aim of reviving its flagging fortunes. Prepare for a lifetime of chicken chasing and crop rotation.

Set for release before the next generation *Tomb Raider* game, not even foot and mouth can stop *Herdy Gerdy* now.

FIRST INDEPENDENT VERDICT OF F1 2001!

The magazine that plays PS2 longer, harder, faster than anyone else – pick up the latest issue and you won't be bored for a second!

PSM2

MORE GAMES!
MORE INFO!
NO BULL!

No.1 FOR PLAYSTATION 2
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DEVIL MAY CRY
WARNING! All hell breaks loose on PS2 – monster playtest!
"GET IN THERE!" Winning Eleven 5 – reviewed!
F1 WORLD'S FIRST REVIEW! 2001
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CRAZY TAXI

Hitch a ride on the PS2

>> TAXI! How does the rawkus racer rank? Read the world exclusive review only in *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*

REVIEWS

The latest PlayStation 2 games – reviewed and rated

OPS2 review ratings

If it's for PlayStation 2, and heading for a store near you, we've played it, argued about it, and, ultimately, judged it. Every issue, we look at the latest games and rate them out of 10:

10/10	Utterly essential
9/10	Hugely satisfying and entertaining
8/10	Highly recommended. Definitely worth your money
7/10	Good, solid fare, and well worth a gander
6/10	Better than average, and fine for fans of the genre
5/10	An average game of some merit
4/10	Poor, but may still have the odd moment
3/10	Extremely disappointing
2/10	To be avoided
1/10	Beer mat

OFFICIAL PlayStation 2 MAGAZINE STAR PLAYER

The OPS2 StarPlayer award
Awarded to any game that gets 9/10 or over. This is just our little way of trying to hammer home what is a fairly simple message: Get this game, and get it now.

Game reviews

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Seat belts are most certainly needed for where Acclaim's joyrider is taking us.

CRAZY TAXI

Sony and Sega go halves on the fare to arcade paradise. And we're all going along for the ride.

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Sega/Acclaim
Price: £39.99
Players: 1
Out: Now
Web site: www.crazytaxi.com

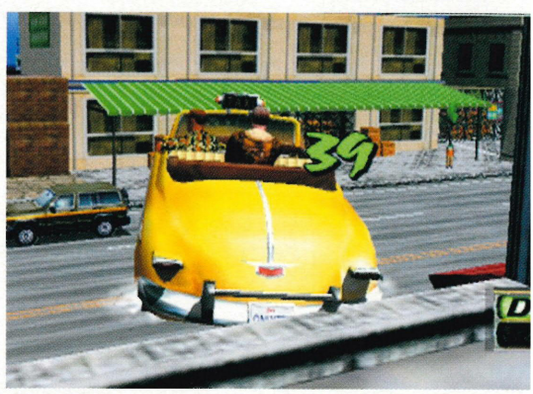
Back story
Originally released as an arcade game, *Crazy Taxi* has been a smash hit on the Dreamcast and thanks in part to Sega's withdrawal on the hardware front it now comes to the PS2.

Are you a taxi driver? Do you drive like a loon, bomb the wrong way down motorways, mow pedestrians down for kicks, speed through hot dog stalls and have a tendency to drive underwater? You do? Then watch out. Nope, there's not a fleet of taxi inspectors heading your way but a group of four cabbies who can out run, out gun and out *anything* that you could ever do. You wanna get crazy? These guys do it for a living, pal. We give you the joyriding explosion that is *Crazy Taxi*.

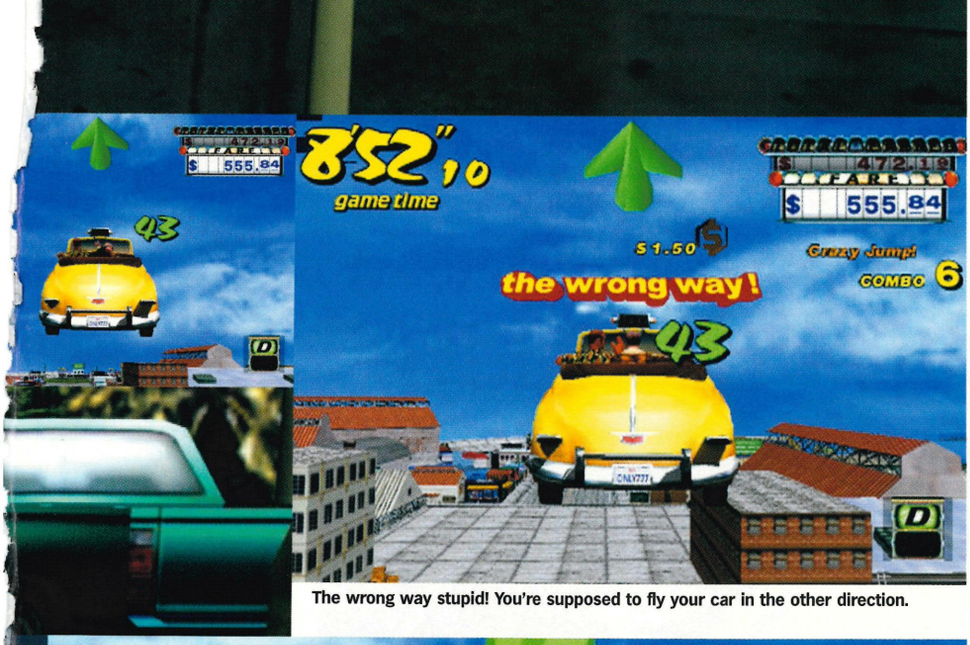
These four Travis Bickles should be familiar to you by now because they've been plying their trade on the streets since 1999 in one form or another. After their outing in the arcades they were subsequently released on Dreamcast in Japan the same year and finally escaped to the Western world on the DC in 2000. Now, thanks to Sega's withdrawal in the hardware market, the PS2 is buckled up and ready for *Crazy Taxi*. It's at times like this we applaud the Dreamcast for bombing out of the market so spectacularly.

Axel, Gena, BD Joe and Gus, our quartet of speeding psychopaths have a limited time to pick up and deliver as many paying customers and earn as much money as they possibly can before their time expires. Simple. Taking to the curving, bisected and multitudinous spaghetti-like streets of a stunning San Francisco inspired city the game starts in earnest once you've finished faffing around sight seeing and make your first pick up. Potential punters pepper the roads waving their arms for your attention and it is entirely at your discretion who you decide to pick up. Once you've spotted someone, be they a mohicaned punk on his way to the police station or a vicar heading to church, draw up next to them and they'll hop in. Your accuracy has to be spot on or they'll dive out of the way through fear of being squashed.

Punters come in four different categories, indicated by coloured dollar signs revolving above their heads. Green are the easy customers requiring a longer journey and have plenty of time, but yellow, orange and red have journeys that get a little bit shorter respectively, so judging who you consider worth picking up becomes tactical, especially during the closing seconds when you need a quick lift to bolster your score.



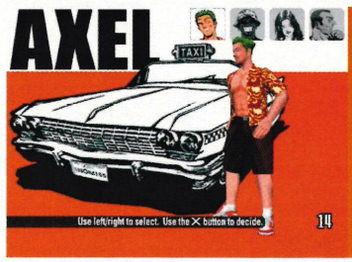
Who needs a road when you've got a perfectly good rooftop that will do the job?



The wrong way stupid! You're supposed to fly your car in the other direction.

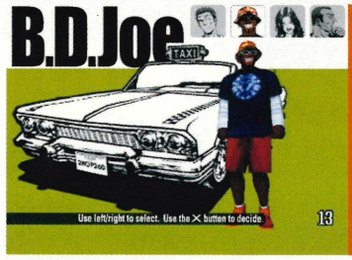
DANNY DE VIT-WHOP

Introducing a new cast to the Taxi ranks.
Although they may be comical to look at, just how dangerous would the drivers be on the real streets of San Fran? Come here for the lowdown...



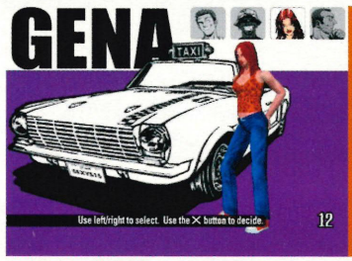
AXEL
Green hair screams of Keith Flint-style bonkersness as does the fact he somersaults into his car. He is desperately impatient, often screaming at his panicking passengers to hurry up as they rush to his car. Has very little road sense and even enjoys the occasional spot of grooming whilst he's supposed to be driving.

Danger to himself: ★★★★★★★
Danger to others: ★★★★★★★★



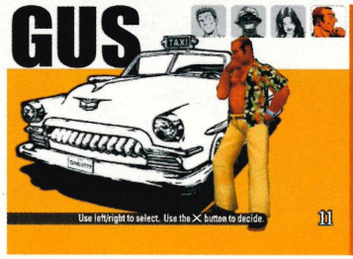
BD JOE
How do we know he isn't blind under those cool shades? By the way he drives you'd think he'd had his legs sawn off too. BD Joe may be able to shake his booty whilst waiting for a passing punter or three but inside his cab, he's lethal – even on the rare occasions he deigns to drive on the right side of the road.

Danger to himself: ★★★★★★★★★
Danger to others: ★★★★★★★★★



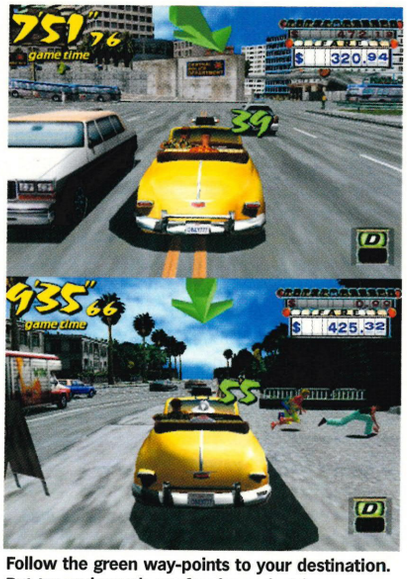
GENA
Well she's got a cuter arse than Gus so we suppose that counts in her favour. She's also a good driver, often high-fiving with passengers when they crawl from the back seat. A little too good-looking for her own good she is a distraction to other motorists. and can often be found scooting away from multiple pile-ups. Bless.

Danger to herself: ★★★
Danger to others: ★★★★★★★★★



GUS
Slow, dopey Gus is well-meaning but that hideous way he flashes his flabby sun-scorched body and the shocking state of his car mean he should remain firmly on the sidewalk. He maybe the most cumbersome of drivers but that doesn't stop his car from packing a clout. Just look at it – would you want to be hit by it?

Danger to himself: ★★★★★★★
Danger to others: ★★★★★★★★★



Follow the green way-points to your destination. But try and watch out for the pedestrians.

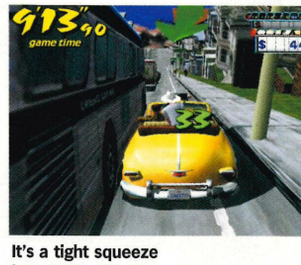
SWEATING FOR IT

The cash rewards do increase with the harder fares and don't be surprised if you're raking up in excess of $500 before you even put your foot down, the city's inhabitants are as lacking in financial awareness as they are a sense of mortality for clambering in in the first place. But if you're eager to become the richest cabbie in town and $500 isn't going to swell your coffers as quickly as you would have liked, then you can always notch up extra dollars throughout your journey by performing 'Crazy Throughs'. These basically mean scaring the living crap out of your poor tossed and bruised passenger hurling around in the back seat.

Traffic polka-dots the streets in droves and by cutting in as close as possible to other vehicles without hitting them your bank balance swells – the longer you manage to hold out without turning yourself and passenger into an unsightly blend of burned metal and innards the higher the bonuses get. We found, much to our passenger's horror, that the greatest financial gains can be found playing chicken with half a dozen juggernauts on the freeway. But be warned – if you hit anything whilst showing off your motoring skills then you can forget the hearty bonuses as your tip counter will spiral back to zero and you'll be forced to start with dimes and nickels again.

Thankfully, each character handles with a marked difference, so by learning their particular strengths you'll soon be able to find the one best suited to your needs. Gena is the sprightliest (but with the least purchase on the road) Axel, (a green-haired good all-rounder) proves the most popular choice for beginners. BD Joe is a heavier, but stronger driver and finally Gus the shirehorse of the group has ponderous, pained steering but a great ability to ten-pin the majority of the traffic out of his way. A combination of learning which driver suits your skills and balancing the amount of red and green fares you take on is essential if you are to become the best cabbie on the streets.

Don't be fooled into thinking the action is confined to the roads and highways of the city just because you happen to be in a car. Such is the ingenuity of city design often the greatest wads of cold hard moolah can be found in the most obscure places and we can only praise the



It's a tight squeeze but short cuts can shave valuable seconds off your precious time.

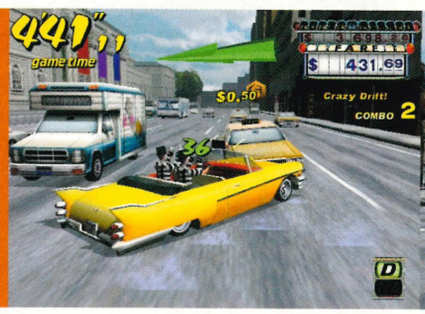
Making San Fran the inspiration for *Crazy Taxi* was an obvious choice – the rolling hills are manic to navigate.

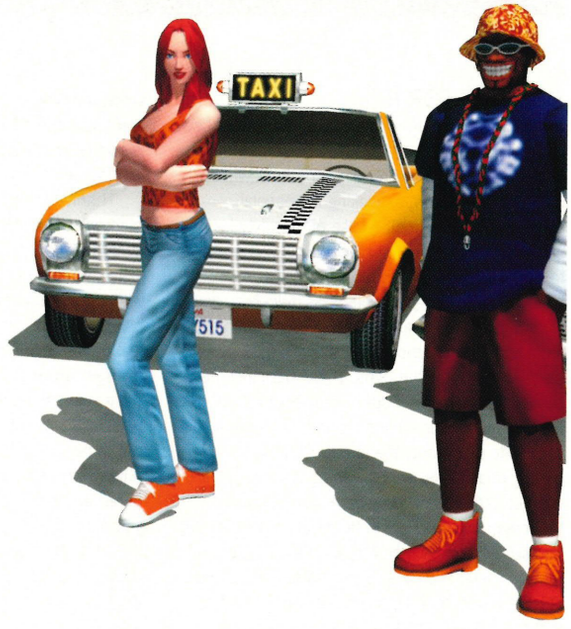
You can even do impressions in your taxi. Here we see Gus performing the 'stray dog needing a wee' move.

CRAZY TAXI 2

You wait all day for one...

No sooner had Sega announced *Crazy Taxi* for the PS2 then screenshots of a sequel surfaced. Currently arcade-only but with a PS2 conversion a distinct possibility, you can tell from these screens that a few things have been changed. The game is now set in New York featuring new cars, a new cast of cab drivers and even multiple passengers sat in the back seats.

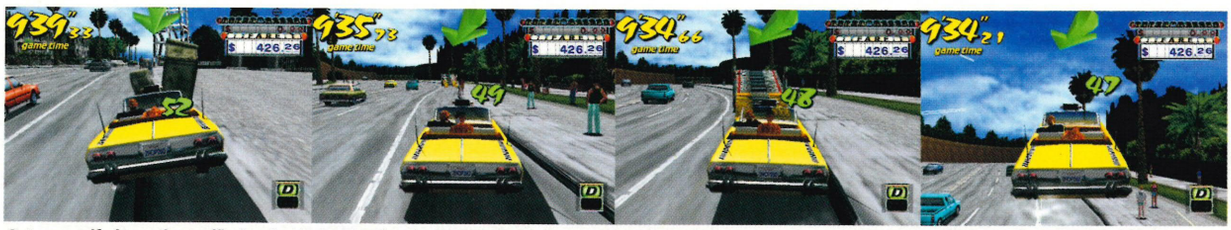




Now, would you accept a lift from these people on a Friday night? Exactly.

amount of insight the programmers originally showed when sketching out their grand ideals for the cities. Rooftops, back alleys and the subway all play host to punters desperately seeking a little mobility and for the very astute even deep under the briny sea you'll find a stray shopper eager for a lift. The area map, although at first glance pretty straightforward, is deceiving and despite where the arrow may be indicating it's riddled with shortcuts and ingenious routes to tempt you from the beaten path. For example, if you think you're fast enough to outrun a freight train inside a darkened tunnel as it roars up behind you then you're more than welcome – you might shave a second off your time in the life-threatening process.

But there is something more remarkable than *Crazy Taxi*'s instant playability. The game engine you're looking at has very little in common with the version that graced the Dreamcast. Yet, suprisingly enough, it's virtually indistinguishable. The PS2 developers had very little (or none at all as some would have us believe) access to the DC code and had to make do with essentially copying what they had played. The handling, soundbites and, oddly enough, graphical faults are all reproduced perfectly, even the daft, unnecessary way you can reverse the rear of your car through pedestrians – though God knows why. You'd think given the opportunity, the developers would've nipped and tucked in the appropriate areas.



Get yourself above the traffic by simply looking for the back of a truck and driving straight over the top of it. Seat belts advised.

Even the people bathing on the beach aren't safe from your wheels of terror.

The taxi with the roof doesn't look half as much fun as Gus's love wagon.

//All the options are replicas of the Dreamcast version and include both Arcade and Original modes//

CARBON COPIES

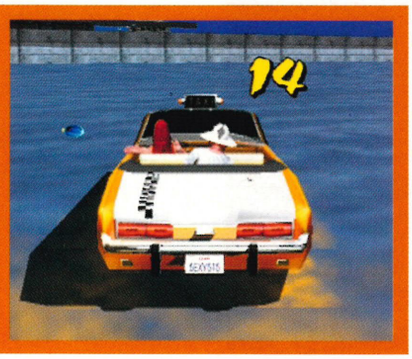
All the game modes included are replicas of the DC version and include both Arcade mode and Original mode, the latter a custom programmed city especially for the consoles. It's a shame really that with the opportunity to reproduce *Crazy Taxi* from scratch that a few other options weren't added. Tiny PS2 only touches, maybe a slightly varied Original mode or perhaps an additional character wouldn't have gone amiss, in fact they'd be thoroughly welcomed.

If there is a minus point, then it would be this. Here was the perfect opportunity for the PS2 to claim *Crazy Taxi* as it's own and revamp a game that's knocking on a bit, but all we've got is an admittedly perfect clone of the original. Yes, the brief was to recreate *Crazy Taxi* as faithfully as possible, and Sega needs to maintain the brand as its own, but the interpretation has been taken too literally, especially with regards to graphical glitches. A bit of spit and polish would have been done wonders. It's a blessing, then that it should be so damned playable in the first place because this certainly take the emphasis away from any problems. To add longevity to the game (because a game originally intended for a maximum half-hour joyride wouldn't hold up too well in the eyes of a console owner who'd just forked out £40) the special Crazy Box mode has been included which will sufficiently satisfy any waning enthusiasm you'll feel after a couple of hours scooting around the crazy cities. Little more than a collection of *Track & Field*-style events with cars, the idea is simple but works a treat. Balloon-popping, traffic-dodging and skidding make up the bulk of your tasks but it's the first event that shows the significance of one of *Crazy Taxi*'s most important functions. This takes the form of a ski jump with your goal distance a whopping 150m away from

BOBBING ALONG

Looking for an elusive customer?

Here's just one of the many customers you'll find in strange locations. As you can see, she is in fact under the water dressed entirely in her Sunday best. And despite not exactly looking like you're underwater, the car certainly acts like it and moves very slowly, so be warned – it may look pretty but it eats into your time like a swine. Although customers like this don't offer greater rewards for their safe delivery, they are worth seeking out anyway. Be sure to search in all the underground tunnels, rooftops, parking lots, shops and back streets for other potential passengers eager to take you off the beaten path.



BOX OF TRICKS

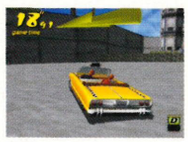
The Crazy Box tasks, all at a single glance.

1. Crazy Jump
Hit a ramp at 150m.
Difficulty: 3/10

2. Crazy Flag
Just back into a flag.
Difficulty: 1/10

3. Crazy Balloon
Pop balloons for points.
Difficulty: 4/10

4. Craft Drift
Spin in circles and hurl.
Difficulty: 4/10



5. Crazy Turn
Drive along a zigzag.
Difficulty: 5/10

6. Crazy Bound
Leap over water.
Difficulty: 7/10

7. Crazy Rush
Deliver people.
Difficulty: 7/10

8. Crazy Jam
See above plus traffic.
Difficulty: 8/10

9. Crazy Pole
Deliver people to poles.
Difficulty: 9/10

This is tame. You can go right under if you try hard enough.

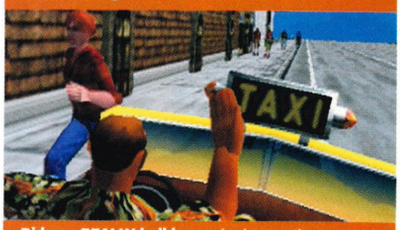
The more outrageous your driving, the more the passenger tips.

See that ramp? Now guess what happens next...

Q&A

GETTING THE KNOWLEDGE

We take a back seat chat with Harvey Elliot, Studio Manager of Acclaim Studios Cheltenham.



Did you REALLY build the entire game from scratch for the PS2?
The code that controls the gameplay was taken from the Dreamcast, but the rendering and maths engines were built from scratch to work specifically with PS2. As a result we got a replica of the Dreamcast's playability combined with the visual quality available on the PS2. We could therefore push the depth cue back on PS2 as the hardware can draw more polygons!

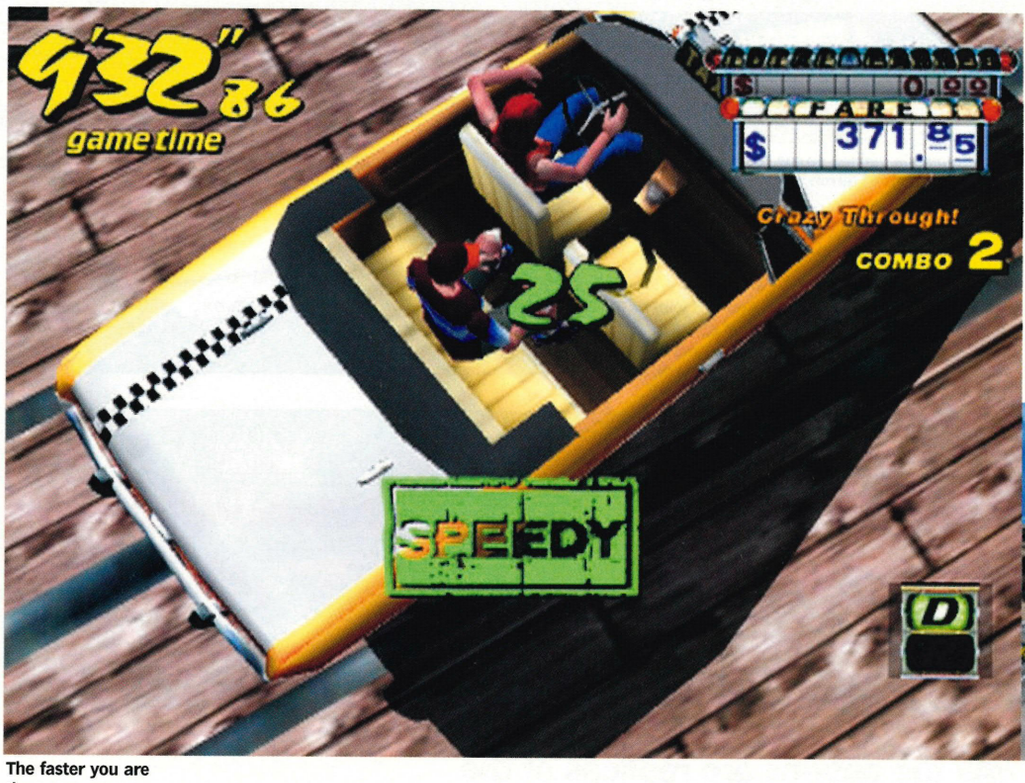
Did you find the idea of bringing *Crazy Taxi* to the PS2 daunting?
Absolutely! *Crazy Taxi* is one of, if not the, biggest selling Dreamcast title with a massive reputation, so it was quite daunting to be working on the conversion. It was also very exciting of course, as we knew if we got everything right the game would be very high quality – quite a nice position to be in at the start of development.

What aspect are you most proud of?
Probably getting the PS2 to do everything that the arcade version did in hardware. Fullscreen anti-aliasing was the first hurdle, requiring some clever texture management. Once that was working the visual quality of the game improved dramatically. The next biggest challenge was the volumetric shadows – the Dreamcast's graphics hardware does this automatically, whereas the PS2 required some clever coding. We think the result on the PS2 is almost identical to the hardware version, though – the shadows of the taxi look great as they cast over walls and buildings, and when you travel beneath bridges the way the shadow cuts through the car is cool!

Is there anything unique to PS2?
We had to get approval from Sega for any additional features, so no, there aren't!

Screenshots of the sequel are already surfacing – do you think you'll be called in to replicate it for the PS2 in the future?
We don't know what Sega's plans are for non-Dreamcast versions of *CT2*.

In general, what do you think about Sega's decision to pull out of the hardware market?
From a games player's perspective it's great – it means people who don't own Sega hardware can now play all of Sega's brilliant videogames. On a personal note, I think the Dreamcast's early demise was a real shame – some of the games were fantastic and it's disappointing that the public didn't take to it. Although for PlayStation 2 owners it's great news.



The faster you are the more money you earn, it's as simple as that.

the take-off point. All you need do in order to succeed is jump it. Easier said than done because your taxi, whichever you happen to choose, will only ever reach an average of 130m.

SPEED CRAZY

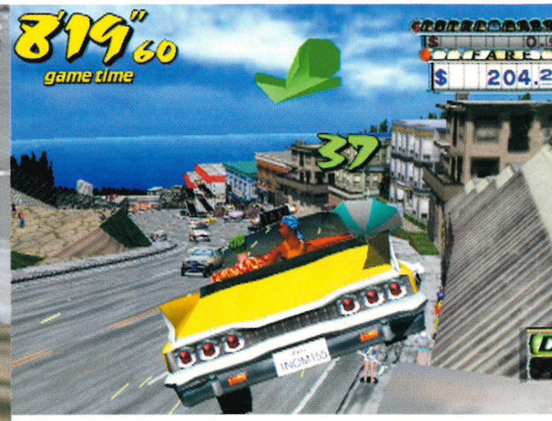
In order to achieve the desired *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* effect of getting your monstrous lump of metal skyward you have to learn the Crazy Dash, the essential driving tool in *Crazy Taxi*. You'll find it becomes a prerequisite for anyone serious about becoming the city's best cab driver and to make tasks even easier, its execution is simple and the results immediate. Simply shift into reverse then quickly shift into forward gear and hit the gas at the same time and you'll lurch forward like a greyhound with a firework up its jacksy

This has it's obvious benefits with regards to time and it makes darting through the traffic a supertest of reactions. Spontaneous movements, pre-emptive turns and twists and precise knowledge of the road are required, but once you learn to cope with your new found speed there'll be no stopping you. You will even be able to reach higher rooftops and barge in on a pool party if you fancy it. But going at great speed does unearth *Crazy Taxi's* primary flaw – the pop-up. Although it is still relatively inoffensive the fact that it is there at all is baffling. It shouldn't happen, especially as the programmers had two or three years of existing code to learn from and adjust. Cars coming in the opposite direction also have a tendency to appear well after the horizon and although they pose no threat to you it still jars if you want to get nit-picky. If, like us, you are still won over by the sheer insanity of the game then the significance of pop-up pales into triviality leaving you free to enjoy the lashings of gameplay on offer.

The cities are still beautifully vibrant, colourful caricatures of real places and there is a hustle and bustle to the place (presumably because nobody seems to be in possession of a driver's licence) that is to be relished. The soundtrack also compliments the game with the usual blend of surf-rock and cheesy riffs and once a disgruntled customer starts bawling at you to put your foot down, the incidental scripting and banter between the two characters becomes highly comical.

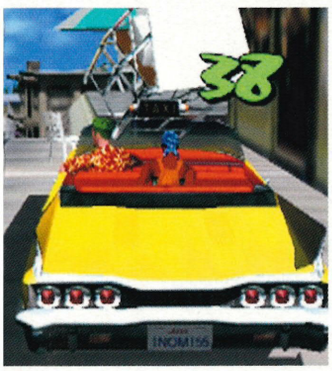
//You'll be able to reach higher rooftops and even barge in on a pool party, if you fancy it//

And the mystery of *Crazy Taxi*'s missing roofs is solved. Not sure about his dress sense mind.



That's no way to treat a classic car.

For once the trains look positively safe.



It's a long way down but you'll be able to handle it.

PRODUCT PLACEMENT

How many corporate logos can you spot?

If ever there was a game that paraded as a walking advert this is it. Not only do you have fictional places to visit but customers are always asking to be taken to haunts such as the Original Levi Shop, KFC, Pizza Hut, Fila or Tower Records. What next – Lara advertising fizzy glucose drinks? Pah!

1. Original Levi Shop
One of the first places to visit, the Levi shop actually has its main offices in San Fran.

2. KFC
The colonel is glad you dropped in but not too happy about the smashed windows.

3. Pizza Hut
Earn some extra money by delivering pizzas. Now that would have been a good idea.

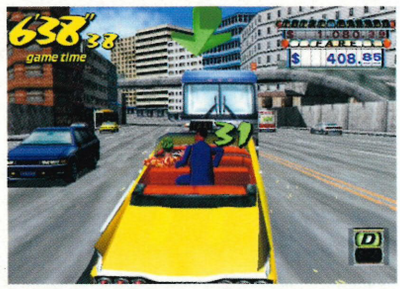
4. Fila
Crazy Taxi shows its age here – does anybody still wear Fila? *(Schoolly D does! – Old Skool Ed)*

5. Tower Records
Pop in and buy a better soundtrack if *Crazy Taxi*'s diet of So Cal punk-lite annoys you.

If you're in search of life-changing gaming then you'd be a fool to search for it within the yellow and chequered realms of *Crazy Taxi*. Whereas the likes of *Metal Gear Solid 2* can claim to be a full meal of a game complete with after dinner mints and brandy, *Crazy Taxi* is pure bubblegum and has no ideas above it's station that it's anything else.

For the uninitiated, *Crazy Taxi* is by all accounts the perfect evolution of the arcade. It couldn't be further removed from the likes of *Space Invaders* and *Asteroids*, but it holds true to all the foundations they laid down years ago. It is unpretentious and relentless fun – even if it is slightly rough round the edges. From the outset to the end, every second is crammed with the type of ceaseless entertainment that feels like it's bludgeoning you about the head and tickling your nadgers at the same time. It's a rollercoaster of sweaty-palmed frustration and narcotic appeal and one that, no matter how much it punishes, always has you returning for seconds.

The first of Sega's games for the PS2, *Crazy Taxi* just reaffirms what a damn fine company it is when it's doing what it does best – making immensely enjoyable games. If it's PS2 debut is anything to go by, Sega has a very bright next-gen future in front of it. □ **Ben Lawrence**



Who's going to move first? You or the great big mutha bus?

There might be a fare waiting down here for you. Then again it might be a red herring.

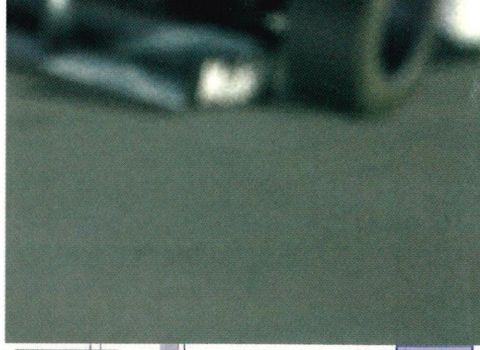
CRAZY TAXI

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	Arcade action doesn't come purer but the game is inevitably looking old, especially with no new features. But if you want speed? Buy this now!
- It's a classic - Offers the best arcade action on the PS2 so far	- Getting on a bit - Lacking any real PS2 polish or new features - Pop-up? On the PS2?	

Graphics	Getting old but still dazzling	07
Sound	Thumping soundtrack. Very nice	08
Gameplay	Daft as a brush with a wee bit of depth	07
Life span	High replay value, but weak in the long-term	07

08

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT



Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Studio Liverpool
Price: £39.99
Players: 1-16
Out: 25 May
Web site: www.scee.com/f1

Back story
SCEE's official F1 franchise is now in its sixth year, and this is the debut run-out on PS2. It's the first member of the series to be developed in-house and, for gamers who could use a refresher course, it comes generously bundled with a 2000 Season Review DVD.

How do you like your driving games? Are you a fiddler or a floorer? Do you bother messing about fine-tuning gear ratios and worrying about 'downforce', or would you rather just get out there and soak up the escapist thrills of screeching around like a foaming lunatic? If the latter, you're probably gibbering at the prospect of *Gran Turismo 3: A-spec*. But if the mere thought of a spanner icon sets your head-propeller whirling, you might, just might be very happy with *F1 2001*.

The trouble with F1 games is the way the all-out racing buzz is normally secondary to a test of consistency and endurance. In the real world, there's a certain jolt in tracing the glitzy soap-opera of a bunch of tightly sponsored, well-bred men and their magnificent machines, which, occasionally, they get to have a race with. Sadly, F1 is such a long-term discipline, it's incredibly difficult to translate into much of a gaming dynamic beyond the standard driving game. And since the actual driving bit is more of a marathon than a sprint, there has to be a strong emphasis on innovation to keep the low-level F1 nerds hooked, punishing those corners lap after lap.

For *F1 2001* though, the angle is slickness and variety, with pretty much every aspect of the sport represented and the authenticity cranked up so high it would take the most churlish chassis-jockey to spot any lapses in translation. All of the professional drivers are 'officially' represented: from icy Mike Schumacher to steady Eddie Irvine and, of course, numerous Scandinavian men with overbalanced consonant-vowel surname ratios. The broad sweep of gameplay options offers multiple entry-points, based on developing skill and familiarity. Test Drive is the usual no-frills sampler; a low-stakes, one-off romp around any course, with any driver. Quick Race is the same, with added token competition. There's also a cute Spectator option, featuring a computer race of which you are the 'director', with the potential to mix and match camera angles to create some kind of fantasy Grand Prix – without adverts every 15 minutes.

FOOT TO THE FLOOR

But the game only really begins to crackle in Championship mode, with an extensive – a really, really extensive – recreation of an entire (2001) season. After selecting a team/driver, it's straight into the race weekend, with the option of taking several practice sessions (mainly to experiment with the car set up) before a timed qualifying run, followed by a brief warm-up and, finally, the race.

This is where things get serious: blue, yellow and black flags, time penalties, strategic pit stops, audacious overtaking. As with most other aspects of the game, pit stop strategy can be customised before the race, with the pit crew advising, via radio contact, when and where to pull in. Of course, you can ignore them and just go for glory, but on longer tracks, pushing the car to the limit for a win will inevitably cost championship points.

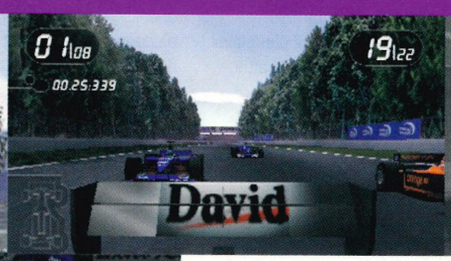
If you prefer you can even watch a virtual race without taking part at all.

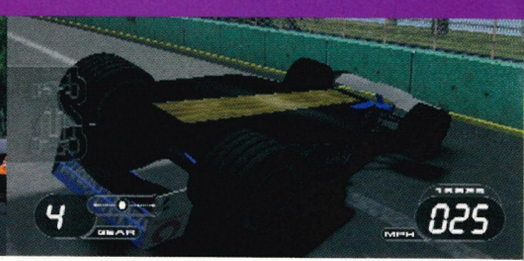
ON THE DVD

FORMULA ONE 2001

Can the official Sony team turn in the definitive F1 kick?

The draw distance is remarkable with the cars maintaining their details right until they disappear over the horizon. Up close they're not too shabby either.

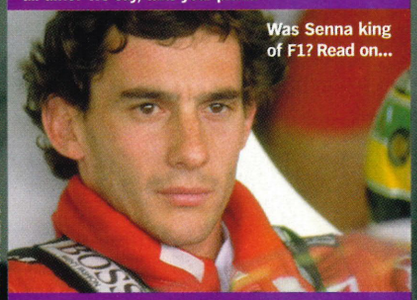




Who'd have thought it? Accidentally turn your car over and you discover that it's glued together with a plank of ply wood.

GRAND PRIX GEEZERS

Tonight's pub-chat topic: who's the best F1 driver of all time? We say, take your pick...



Was Senna king of F1? Read on...

PHOTO: ALLSPORT

FIFTIES
Juan-Manuel Fangio
Argentine. Nickname – Bandy Legs. Mercedes. Amazed all-comers with his virtuosity (his trademark was 'straightening out' curves at full speed). An unequalled wins-starts ratio record. On his final race in 1958, his leading Ferrari rival braked to let him cross the finish line first. You know why? It was outta respect.

FIFTIES/SIXTIES
Stirling Moss
English. Mercedes. Destined to be forever known as the greatest driver who never won the World Championship. Also the first driver who raced for the love of the sport but was equally focused on making a chunky income – his lust for endorsements was way ahead of its time. Quote: "To race a car through a turn at maximum speed is difficult, but to race a car at maximum speed through that same turn when there is a brick wall on one side and a precipice on the other. That's an achievement."

SIXTIES/SEVENTIES
Jackie Stewart
Scottish. McLaren. Known for his outrageously aggressive race-starts, Stewart was, ironically, the first modern driver to speak of the need to emphasise safety. Pre-driving, was a world class target shooter. After a horrendous accident at a rain-slippery Belgian Grand Prix in 1966, he began his safety campaign. Legendary for his automaton-like consistency.

SEVENTIES
Mario Andretti
Italian-American. Lotus. Probably one of the most famous race car drivers of modern times (even the *Microsoft Works* spellchecker knows who he is). Andretti has won everything on four wheels. One of the few drivers capable of winning anything with the mediocre Seventies Lotus cars. An odd reputation for petulant brilliance is false – he was a level-headed grafter, through and through.

EIGHTIES/NINETIES
Ayrton Senna
Brazilian. Toleman/Benneton. An awkward child with a motor co-ordination problem, Senna grew into a monarch of the sport – a modern-day Fangio with masses of talent and a true will to win. Convened his classic rivalry with Alain Prost in 1984's epic Monaco Grand Prix. In appaling weather, Senna closed Prost's 33-second lead to seven seconds before the race was abandoned. Had a fatal crash at Imola in 1994.

Detailed cars make a world of difference to the gameplay. Hell, just watching the things can be cool.

THE WHEEL DEAL

The best way to play *F1 2001* is with a Speedster 2.

F1 2001 can be played perfectly adequately with the Dual Shock 2 but for the feel of a real in-car experience you need a wheel, accelerator, brake and gear stick. Enter the Speedster 2. This has been tailor made to accompany the SCEE game and can be selected as the preferred control method in the Options menu. It certainly doesn't make the game any easier, but it adds to the appeal. You just need to fork out £49.99 and find a suitable sturdy table to attach it too. The wheel feels more solid than most and has a natty little metal gear shift and responsive pedals. Plus, you can use it with other PS2 games too. *Crazy Taxi* anyone?

**Speedster 2 is available from the 30th March for £49.99*

Anybody would think this was *Crazy Taxi* by the way some of the cars act on the track.

(Above and left) Rear view mirrors come in very handy for spotting approaching rivals on your tail.

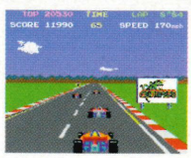
Everything looks and moves fine, with a solid, fog and pop-up-free depth to the zippy (up to 200mph) 3D. Still, only a hardcore masochist would think of turning off the driver's aids. It's clear, but not that clear, and without those crucial bendy arrows telegraphing tight corners, you'll be taking several unscheduled sightseeing trips across sludge and gravel. Control is sharp, although on anything other than cockpit view mode, the driving illusion wobbles slightly, as the cars appear to turn on a bizarre, floating central axis. As ever, analogue control is best, and, of course, there's the extra factor of the Speedster 2 steering-wheel option which works surprisingly well. The competent two-player split-screen mode throws up the intriguing possibility of recreating a rudimentary arcade atmosphere by bolting two Speedster wheels side by side to a sturdy table and turning off the lights. And hiring a surly man to smoke gratuitously in the corner.

Despite being the heart of the game, Championship mode can prove immensely trying to all but the most hardened F1 maniac, given the sheer lengths of race time and distance involved. Gaining a comfortable lead can turn out to be a double-edged advantage, as, for the reasonably steady driver, it can mean enduring lap after lap of featureless, F1 racing track scenery with only the odd grassy rumble and a pit stop to break the tedium. Luckily, the designers have included an excellent Memory Card career-saving option, which meticulously saves a driver's progress throughout a championship, comparing results to previous

A BRIEF HISTORY OF F1-STYLE GAMING

Five formula one racers which rocked the world.

1980: MONACO GP
(Sega, Coin-op)
Overhead-view vertical-scroller with surprisingly good sound and – guaranteed to cause palpitations at the time – a steering wheel!



1982: POLE POSITION
(Atari, Coin-op)
First major 3D driving game. Fuzzy voice urged: "Prepare to qualify!" Posher arcades boasted a supremely cosy sit-down booth version.

1988: SUPER MONACO GP
(Sega, Coin-op)
Getting much more sophisticated now. Sit-down cabinet, steering-wheel, pedals, 3D, and (first signs of authenticity) a reasonable copy of the Monaco GP course.

1992: VIRTUA RACING
(Sega, Coin-op)
A huge step-up in graphics/3D technology and, with its multi-play marquee cabinet, the beginnings of an attempt to inject arcades with a more social atmosphere.

2001: F1 2001
(PS2)
With the arcades now packed with fishing/skiing/guitar-playing simulations, the F1 game comes home – with official licence, steering wheel and, via the net, a unique international lap-time tournament.

Rear views often capture some hair-raising antics. But not in this case.

The famous tunnel at Monaco. Without it no F1 game would be complete.

THE ART OF WAVING

F1. So many special flags, so much time... But what the hell do they all mean?

Red
Stops the race before time.

Chequered
Ends the race.

Blue
Tells a driver he's about to be lapped, or tells him to let a car overtake – otherwise he'll be penalised for obstruction.

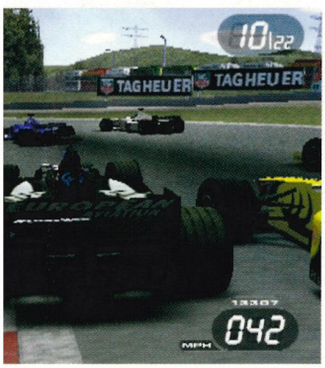
Yellow
Danger. No overtaking. Slow down or stop. Tick one box.

Green
End of danger. Go for it.

Vertical Red and Yellow Stripes
Slippery track (usually oil).

Black with an Orange Disc
Accompanied by a car number, it warns the driver that his car looks rough and he should head for his pit ASAP.

Black
Accompanied by a car number, it summons the driver to go to his pit immediately – normally to be instantly disqualified.



It's hardly very sporting but if your car survives, a quick jolt up an opponent's backside can give you the edge.

racers via three skill levels. So, although sessions can be lengthy and even samey, at least there's the comfort of being able to break things up with the Memory Card. There's also a superb, saveable replay system with the option of re-examining sections of the race, with more than one replay visible at a time, should you feel the need.

REALITY CHECK?

The problem with all of this attention to realism is that it has to be unfailingly consistent throughout the gameplay itself; otherwise there's a clunking sense of the spell being broken. As ever, this mainly applies to the commentary – from cuddly old Murray Walker. There are really only four or five branches of speech possibility, relating to who's driving, who they've just collided with or overtaken and whether or not they've just left the track. At times, this template approach renders the difference in tone laughable. During the relatively pedestrian qualifying sessions, Murray is hugely excited, with shrieks of: "AND! OUT! COMES! (swish of CD, normal voice...) Mika Hakkinen." But, throughout clumsy, incredibly dangerous and much more exciting mid-race shunts, Murray occasionally feels moved to mumble: "Definite contact there between..." Worst of all, should you spin off the track for a teeth-shattering, head-on collision with the wall, Murray barely looks up from his sandwich ("And I think he grazed the wall slightly there...") One day, someone, somewhere, get this 'live' commentary business right.

//Attention to realism has to be consistent or there's a sense of the spell being broken//

For players whose idea of fun it is to finely craft and re-craft their racing lines, peeling waffer-thin shavings off lap-times, Time Attack mode offers an exciting innovation: international competition. Lap times can be converted to codes which, when uploaded onto the Sony Web site, are sorted into a weekly-updated leader board. The owners of the ten fastest UK times will be whittled down to one in a play-off at a UK race-track, and the winner will be flown out to the Indianapolis Grand Prix to compete with the fastest drivers from other global territories, for the world title. Alternatively, if your times don't quite meet the UK leader board standard, there's the perfect solution for those tricky evenings where 15, *F1 2001*-owning mates unexpectedly pop round: a 16-player, turn-based time-attack championship.

So, dubious commentary aside, *F1 2001* is the best Formula One game out there at the moment – and everything that implies. The game is meticulously weighted towards the sim side and while F1 fanboys will froth for the pure authenticity, less committed speed freaks would do better to wait for Studio Liverpool's other much-anticipated driver revving in the wings: *WipEout Fusion*. But if that's the case, why are you reading this last line in the first place? ☐ **Andy Lowe**

This isn't advised unless you're a certain Ferrari driving German. Then you can get away with murder.

FORMULA ONE 2001

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	The best F1 game out there and inevitably, perfect for fans – and fans only. Plenty of depth, but, for less committed boy racers, it'll feel too 'simmy'.
- Official, and high in authenticity - Masses of options, richly customisable - Intelligent, well-crafted save and replay options	- Too intimidating for low-key F1 fans - Poor commentary - Good, solid, decent, but no instantly engaging X-factor	

Graphics	Fast and good-looking	08
Sound	Constant. Revving. Whining...	06
Gameplay	A notch up from the normal	07
Life span	Frequent career save keeps interest high	08

08

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

***WinBack*'s first boss is a giggling madwoman by the name of Lila. She has a gun so be patient, take cover and pick her off shot by head-busting shot.**

OPERATION WINBACK

Solid Snake Vs Jean-Luc Cougar. Can *WinBack* claim first blood in the battle of PS2 stealth adventures?

Publisher: Midas Interactive
Developer: KOEI
Price: £39.99
Players: 1-4
Release: 27 April
Web site: www.koeigames.com/games/winback/default.htm

Back story
An well-received N64 game ported to PS2 but with only a few improvements, *Operation WinBack* might not be a true next-gen title, but it should satisfy Solid Snake obsessives at the very least. Over to Jean-Luc...

Picture the scene – a primary school playground, two dirty-kneed young lads squaring up to each other as their classmates gather round hoping to witness a scrap. First boy: "My dad would kill your dad! He's a black belt in karate and beat up Bruce Lee once!" Second boy, completely unperturbed: "Well, my dad can have your dad because he's in the SAS!" (A gasp of wonder fills the playground as the first boy skulks away, well and truly bated.)

Oh yes, even when we were still knee-high to grasshoppers the image of the SAS operative – cool as ice, hard as nails, scared of nowt – was one that little boys the length and breadth of the British Isles all aspired to. And this, perhaps more than any other reason, explains our fascination with the kind of action/adventure gaming perfected by *Metal Gear Solid* – we're never going to sneak up on an armed guard and snap his neck in reality, but in the guise of Solid Snake it's an everyday occurrence.

There's no doubt about it, in the parlance of the playground, being in the SAS is smart. Furthermore, games that allow you to experience the stealth, danger and thrilling combat of a soldier's life can't help but be totally ace. That's the theory, but for every masterful *Metal Gear* you also get a catastrophic *Chase The Express*. *Operation WinBack*, the first covert adventure to sneak onto PS2, falls somewhere between the two on the scale of stealth success.

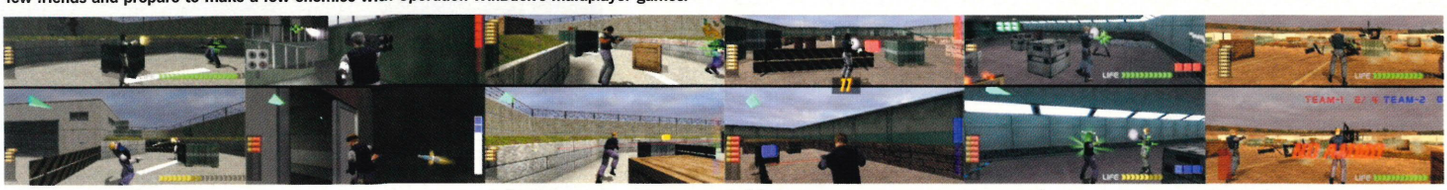
Originally released on N64 last year, *WinBack* arrives on PlayStation 2 with slightly improved visuals and a couple of new multiplayer modes, but it's basically the same game in a different package. And although basic, *Operation WinBack* proves to be a surprisingly entertaining mission, should you choose to accept it.

The hackneyed plot revolves around a terrorist group called Crying Lions, who infiltrate an armaments base using the GULF Strategic Weapons System to destroy a military research centre, murdering hundreds of people. Fortunately, the GULF weapon needs four hours to recharge and in that time it's your task as Jean-Luc Cougar, special operative with SCAT (Strategic Covert Actions Team) to access the base and stop the terrorists' dastardly plans. It's all very *A-Team* and the dreadful cut-scenes and the accompanying voice-acting make *Metal Gear Solid*'s equivalents seem like cinematic masterpieces. But then, we're

//The SAS operative was one that all little boys aspired to//

SHARING THE STEALTH

When you get bored of wasting bad guys in the Story mode, whack in that MultiTap, call up a few friends and prepare to make a few enemies with *Operation WinBack*'s multiplayer games.



Deathmatch
If you've never played a deathmatch you were probably in deep hibernation long before the likes of *Quake* blasted onto our screens. The premise is simple: kill anyone that isn't you and collect superior weapons and handy health packs to help you achieve this goal. The winner is the last man standing.

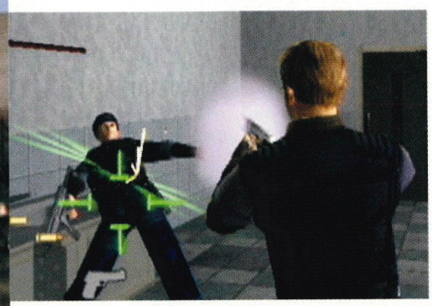
Lethal Tag
A variation on playground tag games – here you have big guns and, erm, a big white cube. Collect the cube and hold on to it to earn points, taking care to avoid opponents because if you get shot the shooter earns possession of the cube. Get seven points to win.

Cube Hunt
Collect seven coloured cubes but every time your opponent blasts you, a cube is lost from your tally. It's hilarious but totally infuriating when you're one away from a full collection only to be shot. The winner is the first to collect all seven cubes.

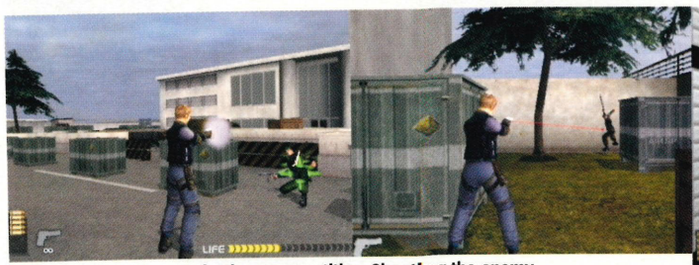
Quick Draw
Yet more cubes. This time simply shoot the seven cubes that match your colour until they disappear. Sounds dull, is dull. Standing next to a moving cube shooting it repeatedly is no sane person's idea of fun and is the worst of the multiplayer games. By shooting all seven cubes, you win.

Team Battle
The same format as any Team Battle mode in any beat-'em-up you'd care to mention. Select three soldiers and go head-to-head in the deathmatch arena. Obvious hint: always start with your best character to try and make him/her survive at least two rounds.

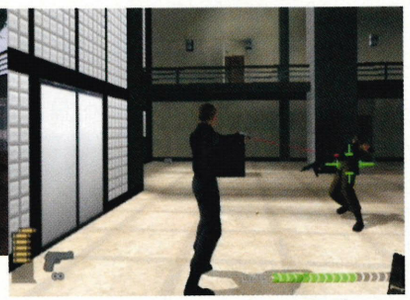
Bot Mode
Team up with a mate to take on a squad of computer-controlled bots or face-off against each other in a grudge match. Either way it's action-packed combat with loads of weapons scattered around and a point is won every time an enemy soldier buys the farm. To win get the required amount of points.



Sneak up on enemies and club them to death but it's more fun to just blast 'em at close range.



WinBack's gameplay is very repetitive. Shooting the enemy in a grassy area is about the only variety you'll get.



It's psychotically pleasurable to pump lead into terrorists. Indulge yourselves.

not here for an engrossing story, we want to sneak around military enclosures and massacre terrorists and in this respect *WinBack* delivers admirably.

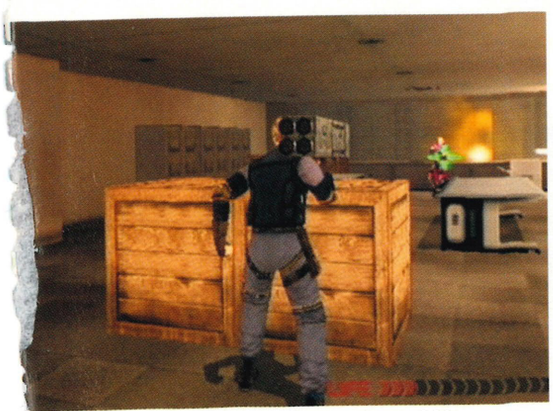
SWING OUT SISTER

Although heavily inspired by *MGS*, *WinBack*'s gameplay is actually closer to *Syphon Filter* as stealth takes a back seat to action-packed shoot-outs. Across four massive environments and 31 levels, the number of occasions you'll sneak past a guard without engaging him in gunfire is minimal. They know you're there – it's just a matter of shooting them in the head and moving on to the next lot. Where stealth does enter the equation is in *WinBack*'s more innovative features: swinging-out and popping-up. You won't last five minutes wandering around in the open, trusting you'll see an enemy before he sees you. To have any chance of succeeding in the mission it's necessary to duck and cover using the scenery to block incoming fire before returning it with interest. This is achieved either by leaning against an object and swinging-out to shoot, or squatting behind something before popping-up to unleash hell. These actions work seamlessly and add a strong, covert edge to both the gameplay and the atmosphere.

Unfortunately, one major problem is that the in-game action is just a case of taking cover, shooting bad guys, moving on to the next room, taking cover and shooting more bad guys (repeat ad infinitum). Puzzles are of the basic 'shoot the sensor to disengage the infrared tripwire' kind, and without the variety and intelligent embellishments that so define *MGS*, *WinBack* rapidly becomes repetitive.

This problem is exacerbated by game visuals that can be summed-up in just one word: grey. Almost all the areas look exactly the same: bland, dull, dark and featuring minimal colours on a scale from mid-grey to charcoal. Admittedly, it's a military base so Laurence Llewelyn Bowen-style extravagance can't be expected but it's so oppressive that when you come across a tree – a lovely green-leaved tree – you'll drop to your knees and praise the Lord for the beauty of nature.

Despite this repetition of gameplay and environments, the desire to move on and see new areas (and shoot more enemies) never lets up. It's a tough challenge and you'll struggle to stay alive for more than ten minutes at a time, but mercifully, continues are unlimited. Once you're accustomed to both taking cover and making carnage, you'll want to see the adventure through to its conclusion. Sure, this is only an aperitif until the main course of *MGS2*, but for those of you who like a little strategy with your shoot-'em-up action, *Operation WinBack* is certainly a better bet than joining the SAS and being tortured by bearded fundamentalists. ☐ **Lee Hart**



The rocket launcher may be unwieldy but it causes maximum damage.

OPERATION WINBACK

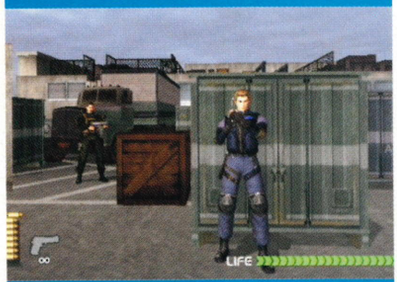
Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	Severely lacking in variety but it's an enjoyable enough stealth shooter to pass the time until *Metal Gear Solid 2* arrives.
- It'll take you ages to complete - Great multiplayer modes	- Shoot, hide, shoot, hide, shoot, hide... - Laughable plot and no sense of atmosphere - Bland, lifeless visuals	

Graphics	Detailed, well-animated but oh so grey	06
Sound	Awful voice-acting, decent tension-building	05
Gameplay	Repetitive but entertaining covert action	06
Life span	A big game and fairly tough with it	07

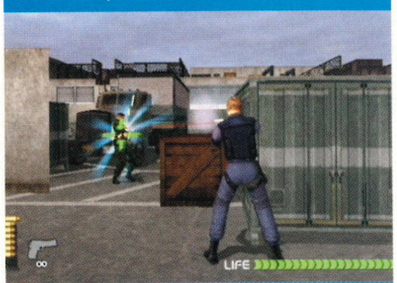
PlayStation.2 VERDICT **06**

TURN ON, POP-UP, SWING-OUT

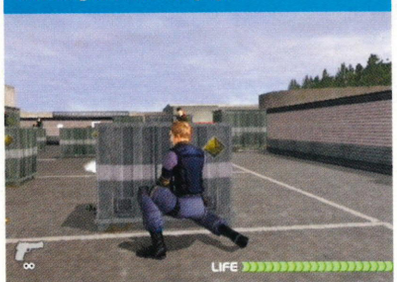
For a game based around stealth and secrecy, *WinBack* is a fairly frenetic, gung ho shooter but there are two features that truly add a covert, cinematic edge to the gameplay...



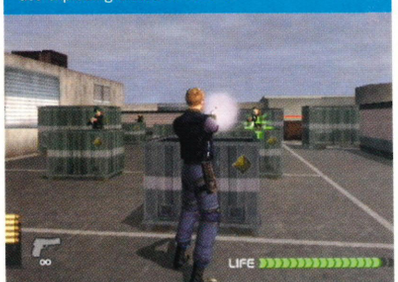
Swing-out: Step One
Don't rush in like a madman, press ⓒ to lean back against any surface large enough to hide you then rotate the camera to see exactly where your enemies are positioned.



Swing-out: Step Two
With the camera positioned to give a perfect view of your enemies, ensure your weapon is fully loaded then press R1 to swing-out from cover, shoot them and swing back into hiding again.



Pop-up: Step One
A more cautious attacking position than the swing-out. Press R1 to crouch behind any kind of barrier between you and the enemy. Note: it's best not to use exploding crates as cover...



Pop-up: Step Two
With an enemy targeted, press R1 to pop-up from your cover, fill your adversary full of lead, then quickly hit L1 to crouch down again before return fire arrives.

Kurt, at it hammer and tongs up against this snake-like off-world scum sucker.

Doctor Flip Hawkins puts his bonkers Atomic Toaster to good use against the alien adversaries.

ON THE DVD

MDK2 ARMAGEDDON

An Uzi-toting cyborg dog? Farting aliens? *Atomic toasters?!* You'll find them all in BioWare's demented adventure...

Publisher: Interplay
Developer: BioWare
Price: £39.99
Players: 1
Out: Now
Web site: www.bioware.com/mdk2/index.shtml

Back story

The sequel to Shiny's acclaimed shoot-'em-up first appeared on DC and PC last year but this PS2 incarnation – with its *Armageddon* sub-title – is described as the ultimate version. Whereas the original saw controlling heroic Kurt in a mainly shooting-based adventure, here you control Doctor Hawkins and his cyborg dog Max, as well as Kurt, and the gameplay has become equally varied – with platform and puzzle elements now seamlessly included in the mix.

There was this mild-mannered janitor called Kurt, a six-limbed cyborg dog named Max, and Doctor Hawkins, an eccentric inventor, orbiting the Earth in their spaceship. One day, they were minding their own business when they noticed an alien race rudely invading the planet. So Kurt donned his armoured Coil Suit, blasted these unwelcomed visitors to kingdom come and, in a blinding victorious flash, heroically saved the world.

This may sound like the beginning of a derivative, *Red Dwarf* alike sci-fi/comedy script, but there's no use waiting for a BBC2 series as it's actually the basis of the original *MDK*; a lunatic third-person shoot-'em-up released on PC and PSone back in 1997. With a warped sense of humour enlivening the entire enterprise and the distinction of being one of the first games to feature a sniper mode, *MDK* received a good deal of critical acclaim, but failed to reach the size of audience it deserved – a situation that will hopefully be rectified with this sequel.

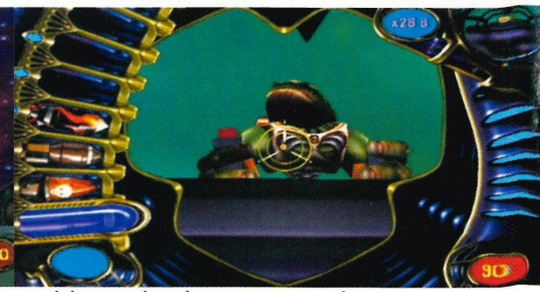
MDK2 originally appeared on Dreamcast and PC last year but the PS2 version has undergone several changes. As well as adding *Armageddon* to the title, BioWare has also tinkered with the gameplay. The adventure itself remains the same, but puzzles have been tweaked to make them more intuitive and placement of enemies refined to ease the difficulty level. Furthermore, there's now a variety of control configurations, so every gamer will be able to find a system that suits their varied dexterity the best.

The story-line follows directly on from the original and comes straight from the file marked 'Stereotypical Alien Invasion Scenarios'. Having recovered from the beating they took at Kurt's hands, the pesky extra-terrestrials have returned with a new leader, Zizzy Balooba, and a renewed desire to command and conquer Planet Earth. As before, it's your job to ensure that doesn't happen.

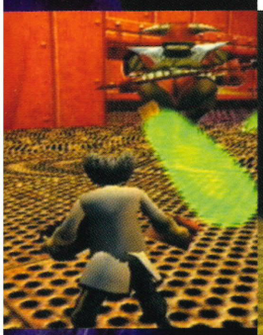
Although the game would still be categorised as, basically, a third-person action shooter, *MDK2* expands on the original's format considerably. Instead of merely guiding Kurt through the adventure, his companions from the first game are now playable characters: Doctor Fluke Hawkins, a dotty inventor in the fine tradition of Doc Brown from Spielberg's *Back to the Future*; and Max, an intelligent robotic dog who is Hawkins' greatest invention yet.

As if developed by Gianluca Vialli, progression utilises a rotation system – you begin by controlling Kurt, the second level has you going at it doggy-style with Max and then you move on to the good Doctor for the next stage. This format continues throughout the game until the final level: the compulsory boss encounter with alien chieftain, the beautifully named Mr Balooba,

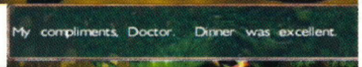
The first boss is located inside this massive craft. Break down them defences...

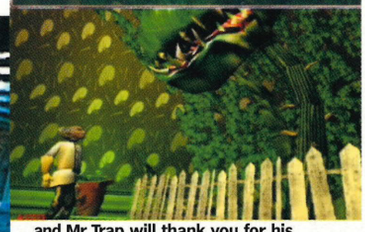


...and then use the sniper scope to zoom in and assassinate the bloated alien beastie.

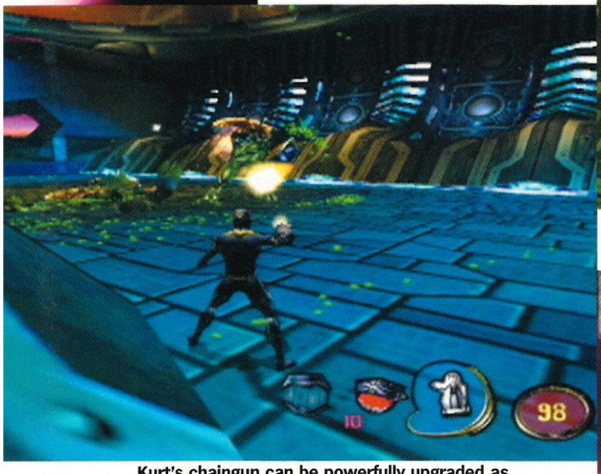


The Venus Fly-trap. Use the Leaf Blower to gust enemies its gob...

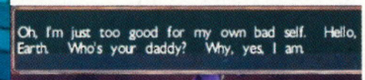




...and Mr Trap will thank you for his meal by giving up an Atomic Toaster.



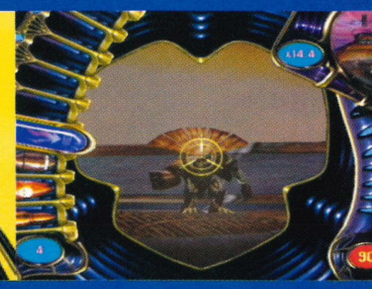
Kurt's chaingun can be powerfully upgraded as you progress through the adventure.



CHARACTER STUDY

It's the end of the world as we know it (potentially) and we feel fine. Honest.

Kurt Hectic



History: The lone star of the original *MDK*, at first glance Kurt is just a mild-mannered janitor (like Hong Kong Phooey before him) but once he dons the protective Coil Suit invented by eccentric genius Doc Hawkins, and arms himself with its built-in chaingun and sniper rifle, he's ready to do battle with all and sundry invading alien hordes.

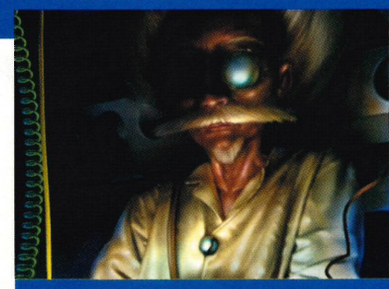
Abilities: Aside from having a Ribbon Chute on the back of his Coil Suit which allows him to glide around, Kurt's specialist skill is long-range assassinations thanks to the sniper rifle attached to his pointy headgear. Whether it's a laser-blasting security device or a nasty alien, Kurt can zoom in and take them out with minimal risk to his hide.

Max The Dog

History: Max is a six-legged cyborg canine with supreme AI who can walk upright and use his four spare limbs for a variety of tasks. With a massive stogie constantly lodged in his gob, plus whopping gunnage, he's the hound equivalent of *The A-Team's* Hannibal Smith – and like the great man, he loves it when a plan comes together.

Abilities: Originally rather tame, Max downloaded an action hero persona to better prepare him for a bout of alien slaughter. Now a cool, fearsome puppy, Max is an all-action kinda dog whose limb excess allows him to carry four firearms at once and do some serious damage as he bounds around all guns blazing, armed to the back canines.

Dr Fluke Hawkins



History: The famed scientific genius with a generous streak of madness and eccentricity, Doc felt unappreciated on Earth, so he left with trusty companions Kurt and Max aboard his spaceship, the Jim Dandy. Responsible for inventing both his doggy pal Max and Kurt's Coil Suit, the Doc plans to return to Earth once he feels he's proven himself.

Abilities: What he lacks in physical prowess, Doc Hawkins more than makes up for in mental ingenuity. With no standard weapons, Doc Hawkins has to combine items in his inventory to fight the aliens – for instance, adding dirty towels to bottles of alcohol and setting light to them provides him with some handy home-grown Molotov cocktails.

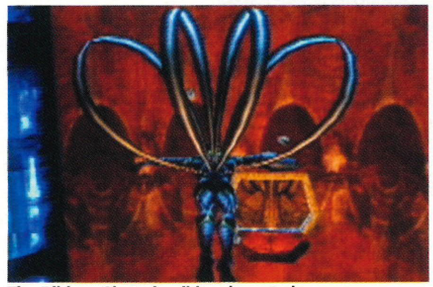
//Kurt's levels are stealth-based, sneakily floating around with the Ribbon Chute//

where you can choose your favourite of the heroic trio to fight the ultimate battle.

As well as simply offering a touch of variety in the way you swap characters after every level, *MDK2* manages to achieve something far more substantial – creating a true 'three adventures-in-one' gameplay diversity. Each character has his own unique abilities requiring a completely different approach to the action depending on who you're controlling. Kurt's levels are largely stealth-based; using his sniper scope to pick off enemies from a distance and sneakily floating around with the Ribbon Chute. In stark contrast, Max with his ability to carry four weapons at once inspires a more traditional bout of shoot-'em-up madness; his levels packed to the brim with tasty firearms to collect and aliens to waste with them. As befits a man of his intellectual prowess, Doc Hawkins' adventure dispenses with much of the carnage and concentrates on mental stimulation. As a result, puzzles and platform-based antics dominate and because of the Doc's physical frailty, brains rather than brawn are necessary when you do finally encounter the unforgiving brutality of gun-wielding enemies.

Undoubtedly the most inventive of the three gameplay styles, Doc Hawkins' levels are also the most entertaining. The Doc's skill lies in using his noggin to combine items and produce a far more useful object that can get him out of a tricky situation. For instance, as you try to negotiate your way around a massive engine room, Doc's limited jumping abilities won't get you very far so you have to find a piece of cord, combine it with the pipes that are already nestling in your bloated inventory and – voila! – you've made yourself a ladder that'll help you reach the exit.

Although, as we've mentioned, the alien invasion plot is utterly generic, the way the story unfolds is anything but. Driven by well-written, superbly voice-acted cut-scenes at the end of each level, this isn't your average throwaway videogame narrative. There's an almost *Python*-esque daftness to proceedings and whether it's a group of trumping creatures guffing pathetically as they're mown down by Max in a torpedo, or the English-accented dotty Doc spouting a victory speech while a humungous alien creeps up malevolently behind him, *MDK2* is one of those rare games to display a real sense of humour which seeps through constantly.



The Ribbon Chute in all its elegant glory – a vital part of Kurt's basic survival kit.

Q&A

GREGORY'S GAME

***OPS2* has a chinwag with Greg Zeschuk, co-owner of Canadian development studio BioWare and the designer behind *MDK2 Armageddon*.**

PHOTO: NICK WILSON

What differences are there between this PS2 version of *MDK2* and the earlier Dreamcast and PC incarnations? Is there anything you've been able to implement that simply wasn't possible before?
The majority of changes we've made have to do with improving the gameplay. Specifically, we've made changes in every single level of the game to make puzzles more intuitive and to improve the difficulty levels. We've also rearranged the layouts of a number of the monsters throughout the game to modify how it plays. Besides changing the core game content, the numerous control configurations we've added really improve the playability because there'll be a good, familiar control configuration for everyone among those we provide. Overall, we see *MDK2 Armageddon* as the ultimate version of *MDK2*.

How did you find converting the game to PS2 technology – is it as awkward as some teams have claimed?
The PS2 technology isn't so difficult as it is different – it has an architecture that is quite unique among videogame machines and as a result, it takes a little getting used to. I think most of the problems that arise for people working on the PS2 are due to assumptions that it is like any other game console. It's unique but also very powerful.

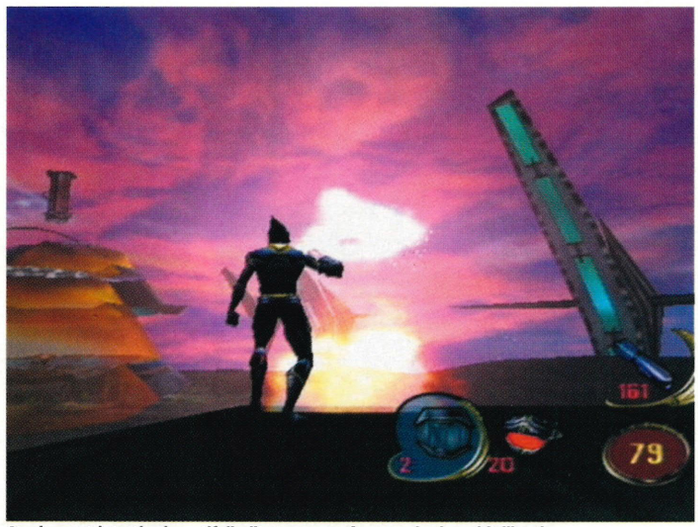
For people who have never heard of *MDK2* before, how would you describe the game and what do you think makes it stand out from the action/adventure crowd?
It's a humorous 3D action platform shooter! I know that's quite a mouthful, but that's more or less how we see it. I think what makes it stand out from the crowd is the sheer variety of things in the game; it's at least three full games in one (perhaps even more than that!)

***MDK2* is an extremely distinctive game, not least in its sense of humour. What are its inspirations, both in and out of the videogame medium?**
That's a tricky one. I would definitely say the previous *MDK* and Shiny's other famed series, *Earthworm Jim*, were inspirational for us. Aside from that, I can't really pretend to know where all the other silly stuff came from.

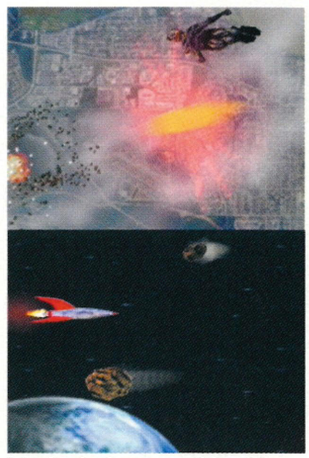
With Kurt returning from the original *MDK*, how did the idea come about to make the previously incidental characters, Max and Doc Hawkins, playable too?
Early on in the development process we all knew we wanted to do something different from the original, but, at that specific time, we just didn't know what it was. First off, we first started thinking about adding additional powers to Kurt, but after we considered how many things he could already do, it seemed a bit like overkill. Once the development had progressed further and we had real 3D models for the Doc and Max (along with their animations) and we could see them running around in the game, it finally hit us – we should make them playable as well. That was the answer! From that point on we had satisfied our desire to add something significant to the *MDK* franchise and after that, it was smooth sailing all the way to completion.

Of the three playable characters, who is your favourite and why?
I like the Doctor, mainly because I'm a bit of an adventure game fan and I enjoy his 'adventure-lite' puzzles. And he's quite nutty, which I also find appealing.

Is there likely to be an *MDK3* in the near future and are there any other upcoming BioWare projects in the offing you can let us in on?
Out of courtesy to our publishing partners I'm not able to answer that question with regard to *MDK3*. As for other BioWare projects they're all currently announced. The games we're working on at the moment are *Neverwinter Nights*, *Baldur's Gate 2: Throne of Bhaal* and the *Star Wars* RPG.



Staring out into the beautifully-lit expanse of space: looks a bit like the touchingly eye-dampening bit right at the end of *Return Of The Jedi*.



Inter-level sub-games safely guide your character to the next area.

Combine the duct tape with the magnets to stick Doc to the ground. Then use the fishbowl as a helmet, enabling him to breathe. Eaaaaasy...

When Max discovers the jetpack. Watch out below...

//A big, quirky, varied adventure with bags of ideas and ambition, realised to perfection//

A helluva lot of thought has evidently gone into its creation, and this shines through in both the story and the gameplay. A favourite example of ideas and humour bonding to great effect occurs in Doc Hawkins' first level. Unarmed and faced with a battalion of baddies, you have to combine the pipes, hand-dryer and duct tape you picked up earlier to build a high-powered leaf blower. And what do you do with your new toy? Naturally, you use it to blow the aliens across the room into the hungry jaws of a gigantic Venus Fly-trap lurking conveniently in the corner. And how does the petrifying plant react to the meal you've generously provided? Obviously, he rewards you with an Atomic Toaster which can be combined with a loaf of bread to fire radioactive toast at your enemies. Absolutely inspired.

Visually it's also fairly unique – boasting a graphical style mixing elements of Jack Kirby comic books with ripples of organic undertone reminiscent of the *Alien* movie franchise, which bubbles in the background like the lava pots in hell. Unfortunately though, the graphics don't appear to have been tweaked for PS2 and a disappointing jagged blockiness betrays the game's year-old origins. However, when this is the only real criticism you can level at a game, it would be churlish to use it as a stick with which to beat the poor thing. In an environment where so many games choose fancy visuals over any actual content, it's a credit to *MDK2* that it ignores the path marked 'Graphical Tarts' and follows the 'Original, Entertaining Gameplay' signpost.

So, what we have here is an ageing game in danger of being ignored by PS2 owners who, quite reasonably, want totally original titles for their console. And okay, you've got us bang to rights, it's true that if you've already played it before on another machine, *Armageddon* actually isn't radically different enough to require second helpings. But, and here's the good bit pilgrims, if you're a newcomer to the crazy world of Kurt, Max and the Doc then dive in headfirst, the water's lovely. You'll discover a big, quirky, varied adventure with bags of ideas and ambition, most of which have been realised to absolute perfection. For fans of shooting, puzzle-solving, platforming and plain good old all-out adventuring, go and buy yourself a copy to find all this and more crammed like a crackerjack into one excellent package. ☐ **Lee Hart**

MDK2 ARMAGEDDON

Why we'd buy it:	**Why we'd leave it:**	**A unique, challenging adventure with ideas bursting out of its Coil Suit. Destined to become a true cult classic.**
- An offbeat, refreshing game with loads of variety - Inspired, three-character format - Great sense of humour	- Dark and dated visuals - No multiplayer options - Fairly linear gameplay	

Graphics	Stylish but also rather blocky and dated	06
Sound	Top-notch voice-acting, effects and score	08
Gameplay	Entertaining mix of shooting and adventuring	08
Life span	A tough challenge even on the 'Easy' setting	08

08

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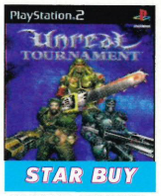

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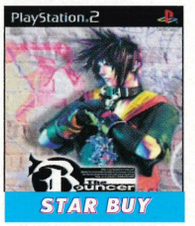

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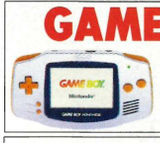

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Strangely there are no lengthy scenes at the barbers – though you obviously spend half your day there.

KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO

Ubi Soft's warriors live and die by the sword – but only after weeks of training...

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Developer: LightWeight
Players: 1-2
Release: June
Web site: www.lightweight.co.jp/kengo/index.htm

Back story
Kengo marks the PlayStation 2 debut of LightWeight, the ex-Square Japanese development team responsible for *Bushido Blade* on PSone. *Bushido Blade* allowed players to kill their opponents with one single move – a clever idea, but one that some gamers shied away from. *Kengo* does things differently.

Befitting a game based on the honourable samurai clans, *Kengo* makes a stand against the OTT throws and gravity-defying attacks of *Tekken Tag Tournament* and *Dead or Alive 2*. Instead, it is a measured mano-a-mano contest where button bashing supposedly plays second fiddle to inch-perfect movements and where one well aimed move can turn a fight around. It's a brave experiment and, on the whole, a worthy one.

Created by the team behind PSone's *Bushido Blade*, *Kengo: Master Of Bushido* runs with the same idea of using accurate attacks to incapacitate an opponent, while making a few concessions to today's cravings for combination attacks. To balance both factors, *Kengo* is split into two distinct parts. There's a single-player mode wherein you train a fighter to take on a series of rivals. Alternatively, there's a simplistic Tournament competition that shuns the other mode's self-improvement elements in favour of straight action sequences and a dozen pre-selected warriors.

The single-player mode is the meatiest part of *Kengo*, but strangely is also the least satisfying. Selecting one of three fighters, players embark on a less than rigorous training regime to improve various character stats – à la David Carradine's *Kung Fu* cult series – and to prepare them for stick fights against rival students. Challenges range from the enjoyable to the downright odd, with standing in a waterfall and using ◎ to eke out a power bar falling into the latter camp, although balancing on a see-saw by keeping a pointer centred and hacking bamboo canes to enhance reflexes are more successful. Ultimately, though, these tests seem like unnecessary fillers and offer little true preparation for the main challenges that await in *Kengo's* many sword battles.

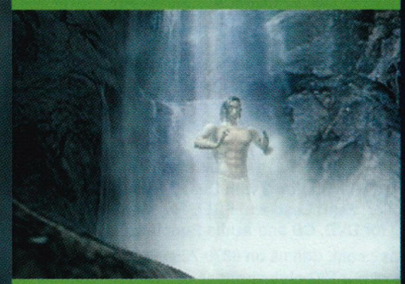
SIMPLISTIC SWORDPLAY

In direct contrast to the laid-back feel to the training sessions and its gradual build up to the main sword fights, the speed and skill of *Kengo's* Tournament mode is far more entertaining and the highpoint of the game. Selecting from 12 fighters, players take on a mate or the CPU within a series of single-round fights to the death. However, although training strives to highlight the intricacies of fighting, *Kengo's* swordplay is actually rather simplistic. Attacking is limited to three buttons governing striking, parrying and blocking, with the height of each determined by the D-pad. Each

BUILDING A BETTER FIGHTER

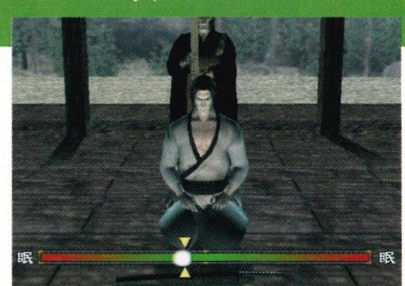
Although the sub-games are used to boost the fighter's assorted stats, they're more memorable for their odd nature than fulfilling content.

Wood Hitting A simplistic and rather short-lived 'Simon' variant. Repeat the sequence at the top of the screen to eventually split a wooden post. **1/5**

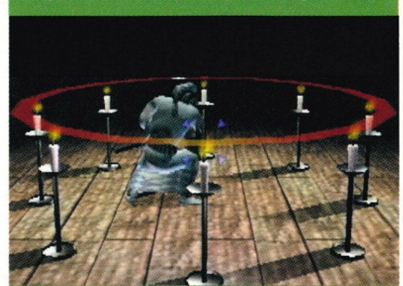


Waterfall Test As the Dual Shock rumbles to reflect the increasing power of the water pressure, hit the ◎ button to counter its effect. **2/5**

Bamboo Split More like it. Use combinations of sword skills to chop down a forest of thick bamboo canes. Use fancy spins to fell several at once. **4/5**

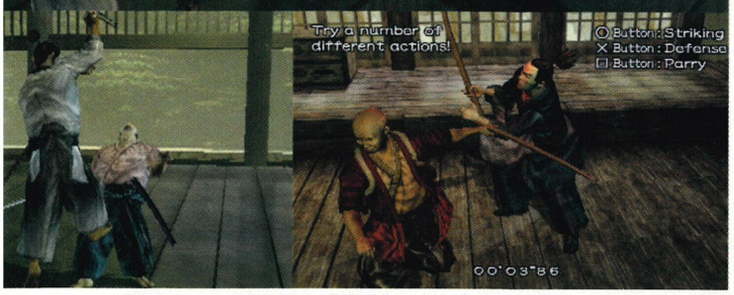


Meditation Seated on a wobbly plank, a marker shifts from side to side, reflecting your shifting weight. Keep it centred. Strangely calming. **3/5**



Candle Snuffing Press the button as a marker passes each candle. When all eight are marked you spin, extinguishing any correctly targeted. **2/5**

You can easily outmanoeuvre your opponent and even get right behind him.



Didn't see that death blow? Use the replay feature to enjoy it from all angles.

WALK A MILE IN MY SANDALS...

Single-player mode offers a choice of would-be masters for you to command.

Shozaemon Hyuga
The most powerful of the fighters, and a surprisingly speedy attacker.

Yasutomo Yoshimura
Light on his feet, this lad moves well and delivers quick combos.

Taketsune Nakayama
The all-rounder of the group and thus an ideal first choice.

Training routines start with simple exercises where you must strike your opponent a number of times, or parry them a number of times before moving on to more complex regimens.

//A brave experiment and, on the whole, a worthy one//

character also has a special three-move combination attack, while anyone sticking with the single-player mode can custom-build these with additional moves revealed during the training process. It's all very simple and already you can hear the *Tekken* brigade gasping at the sheer lack of manoeuvrability *Kengo* must offer.

Strangely the limitations imposed by *Kengo*'s controls actually work in the game's favour. With only one thrust or block to fall back on, *Kengo* forces the player to contemplate their every move. This sets up taut battles between equally matched combatants and while it sadly abandons *Bushido Blade*'s idea of felling a player with one move, it still eschews the energy bar system of countless fighting games. Instead, entrants have a bar that merely reflects the seriousness of each wound, with the bar flashing to indicate when they are at death's door. As compromises go, it means that *Kengo* is a more even battle than *Bushido Blade* yet also adds more freedom to the action, letting players sit back and absorb smaller hits while waiting for their opponent to leave themselves exposed to a single, deadly thrust. Hanging back also gives the player the chance to replenish their 'Ki' level, which is used to effect the deathblows that separate the men from the corpses.

This combination of open tactics and split-second timing combines to create a tense competition where the next conceded hit could be the killer blow, and this in turn adds more of an edge to the action's graceful fight sequences. The large and well-animated combatants let rip with stunning slashing moves, acrobatic rolls or blocks against desperate thrusts, while arterial geysers spray gallons of blood as the loser slumps to the floor. The speed of these sequences also plays a major part in *Kengo*'s success and to see a flurry of attacks instinctively blocked and returned can be breathtaking, with the sound effects complementing the action with the requisite clangs and clashes.

Ultimately, *Kengo* is a strangely unbalanced game, with little cohesion between the so-called rigours of training and the frenetic pace of the actual bouts. The Dojo tutorial arena is nothing but a redundant, pumped-up practice mode with a few simplistic sub-games tacked on. It also isn't the great warrior it thinks it is and any training can be replicated by leaping in feet first to the Tournament mode and slamming a few buttons. That said, when it is played against the better CPU opponents (of which another dozen are hidden) or a well-matched mate, it is more than a rival for most fighting games. The ability to counter and parry moves adds an extra dimension to a genre dominated by one-sided fighting games and players are even forced to walk away from a skirmish to contemplate their next move.

Our advice then, Grasshopper? Forego all that waterfall, meditation and bamboo-cutting guff and dive straight into the Tournament mode and its 24 adversaries. You may not find spiritual elevation, but you will find a halfway decent fighting game that successfully injects precision and skill into the genre. □ **Steve Merrett**

Dojo training can take up a lot of the young samurai's life.

KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	Training mode is padding to make up for the limited nature of the fast-paced bouts. Nevertheless, *Kengo*'s energetic action is clever enough to warrant continued play.
- Great two-player mode - Intense one-on-one action, where every move counts - Beautifully conceived yet simple controls	- The training mode is mere padding - Not a huge amount of skill involved - Rather short-lived	

Graphics	Subdued use of colour, but lovely movers	07
Sound	Sparse oriental tinkles and grunts	05
Gameplay	Balanced swordplay	07
Life span	Limited on your own, endless with a mate	06

06

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Although they look formidable they need expert pilots to drive them. Up for it?

RING OF RED

Are you ready to see what would have happened if the war never ended?

Publisher: Konami
Developer: KCE Studios
Price: £34.99
Players: 1
Out: May 2001
Web site: www.konami-europe.com/deutsch/games/screen.html

Back story
Although it is eager to bring as many quality titles to the UK as possible, Konami was unsure whether a title such as *Ring Of Red* would be worth releasing over here. It was only after considerable deliberation that the decision was finally made – *Ring Of Red* would invade.

This sounds interesting doesn't it? A turn-based mech game combining real-time strategy and doctored WWII historics concerning Japan's economic and political persuasions after the fall of Nazi Germany. Not a faint musky whiff of busty femme fatales waving heavy weaponry around and blasting heads off in their crotchless panties – just good old military idealism in a war torn country animated in muted colours and dealing with the angst of beleaguered and disillusioned soldiers. In theory, it's enough to warrant buying cosy pillows, a fat duvet and falling sound asleep for a thousand years. But of course, that's only 'in theory'. In reality it will keep you transfixed. You'll be barking orders like a demented despot and sending hundreds of troops to their death on a whim. Despite sounding like the recipe for an unmitigated disaster, *Ring Of Red* is quite the opposite...

Japan is indeed war-torn. The Bomb never happened, leaving Russia free to invade from the North and subsequently forcing Japan to decide whether to co-operate or resist, thus splitting the country three ways – Russian Japan, the collaborators and the Japanese Republic. Somehow (let's not ask) mechanoid technology emerged soon after the war ended in Europe and quickly became the principle offensive weapon in the new 'Japanese War'. You are a trainee mech pilot in a battle simulation when something goes horribly wrong – a prototype mech with superior fire-power is hijacked in broad daylight. Because you were training against it and in closest vicinity to it at the time you are ordered to pursue it. Talk about diving in at the deep end. If it were any deeper there would be undiscovered semi-luminous creatures dwelling at the bottom.

READY OR NOT

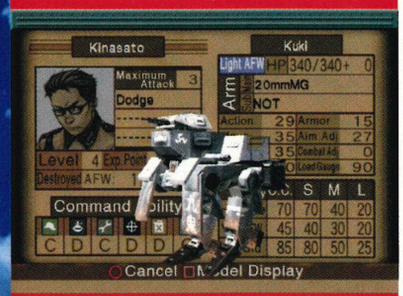
So the chase to prevent the mech reaching a port and leaving the mainland begins across the undulating plains of Japan, all played out in a series of grid hopping turns. Depending on the functionality of your craft (you are joined throughout the chase by other mechs drafted in to help the mission) your mech squadron will either be able to make quick progress or, if it is laden with weapons and armour, move only slowly. This part of the game is pedestrian and hinders what would otherwise be a non-stop mechanical slugfest. Once you encounter an enemy though, watch the red mist cloud your vision.

As well as your clanking great mech you also possess a company of specialised troops flanking you either side. These are trained in a variety of tactical operations ranging from field medics to suicidal, close-quarter flash gunners who attempt to blind the opposing mech pilot by tossing flash

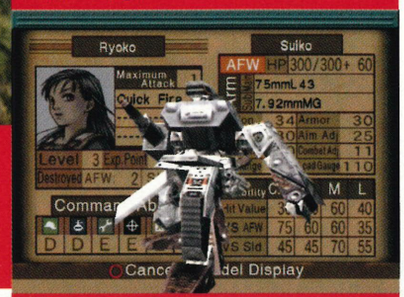
Battles take place anywhere, even swinging high above a valley on a massive iron bridge.

THE SQUAD

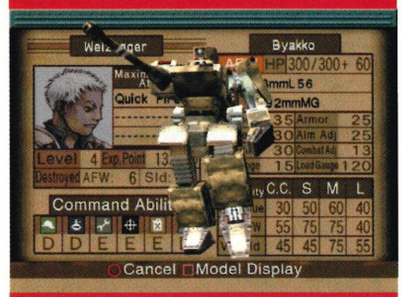
If you like nothing better than strolling the fairways with a wood in your hand, there are some evil pitfalls lurking out there that might just make you think again...



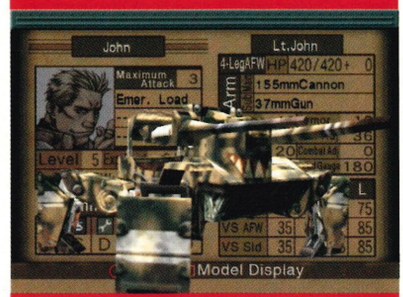
Kuki
The smallest mechanoid, Kuki is also the weakest, and consequently often the first to be destroyed. Its agility, quick reload time and ability to dodge attacks more than compensate for its weakness and lack of firepower though.



Suiko
Heavily armoured and armed with a powerful single rocket launcher this samurai-inspired robot is excellent at long-range and mid-range attacks. It has a slow reload time though and doesn't fare too well in close combat.



Byakko
Its long range cannon is both devastating and highly accurate, causing massive damage to its foes. It has a short reload time and excellent manoeuvrability but its shields suffer damage easily

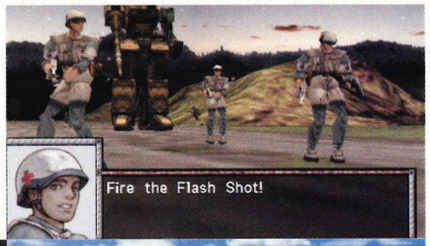


Little John
The heaviest and most heavily armoured mech is lethal at mid- and short-range battles. It can also hide the most troops. Unfortunately it is slow and can easily be targeted at close range due to its size.

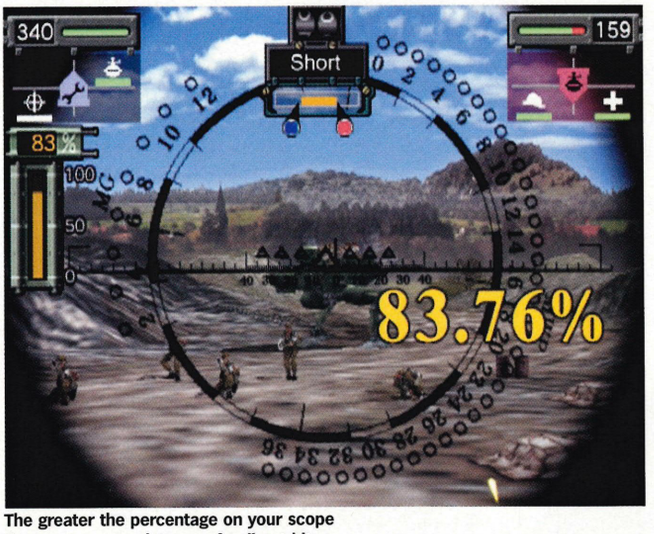
THE FRONT LINE
Changing the face of war.

Ring Of Red features one of the most inventive and disturbing opening sequences on the PS2. Real footage of WWII troops has been engineered to produce the effect of giant mech robots wandering through real-life battlefields. These mechanical giants can be seen emerging from the smoke, escorting POWs along the frontline and trampling over burned out cars. Disturbing? Yes, but highly effective.

Blood is sprayed everywhere when soldiers are struck with the lethal mounted cannons.



As well as attacking the enemy mech you can also choose to mow down their troops.



The greater the percentage on your scope the greater your chances of a direct hit.

grenades through his view hatch. Each flanking company can be sent forward and retreated at will to deal with the other mech's own equally well-trained company of troops. Effectively this means you have two battles going on at once – one involving troops, one involving mechs. Because of their symbiotic relationship both ground troops and machinery are equally important.

Freelance troops can also be obtained throughout the game by seizing grids on the map that occupy buildings, but the urban battlezones are often harder to secure than those on the flatter planes. Your robot is affected by various elemental obstacles so wandering into a rubble strewn street littered with burned out cars and barbed wire expecting an easy ride is a bit like assuming a spud gun and a mildly disgruntled expression will do the trick. These battles are ferocious. Troops retreating from a peppering of hot lead courtesy of the enemy are scythed in half by the onslaught, tumbling to the ground clutching at their frothing red throats or clasping at their chests as thick warm viscera explodes from them. It's delicious.

The robots also react similarly depending where they are struck. It is hard to control the targeting system from a distance but the higher the percentage of a successful hit, the more likely you are to do mischief. Damage parameters on the mechs revolve around the main weaponry, legs and body and it is the line you walk between accuracy and the enemy blowing you away before you fire that can sometimes swing a confrontation. Basically, you need to learn how to be a damn fine tactician as well as learning to appreciate the beauty of human innards.

//Wallop bloody great warheads into staggering lumps of burning metal//

Ring Of Red's surprising appeal is born through an amazing balance of strategy, user-friendly interface, detailed 20th Century-inspired robots and prerequisite gut spillage. The thrill of walloping bloody great warheads into a staggering lump of burning metal on the other side of the battlefield is unsurpassed. Mowing down fields of troops, spitting clods of mud high into the air with every step of your mighty machine and finally witnessing the enemy collapse in plumes of billowing, black smoke is simply fantastic.

Ring Of Red is, sadly, unlikely to break into the top ten purely because of it's mechanoid/turn based pedigree, but the gameplay beyond is nothing more than top class and represents yet another triumph for Konami. ☐ **Ben Lawrence**

Send your troops forward and they either fight like men or get turned to sushi.

The braver your troops the more risks they take. They could win you the battle too.

This is the sight you want to see. Complete destruction of the enemy's mech.

RING OF RED

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	A great, highly original and engaging title. A must for those in search of something different.
- Refreshingly original - Surprisingly in-depth	- Slightly too quirky - A bit too pedestrian earlier on	

Graphics	Metallic, muted and original	08
Sound	The weakest aspect. Adds nothing	04
Gameplay	In-depth and engrossing	08
Life span	Deliberate, methodical battles prolong its life	07

08

PlayStation.2 VERDICT

PlayStation 2
Release yourself
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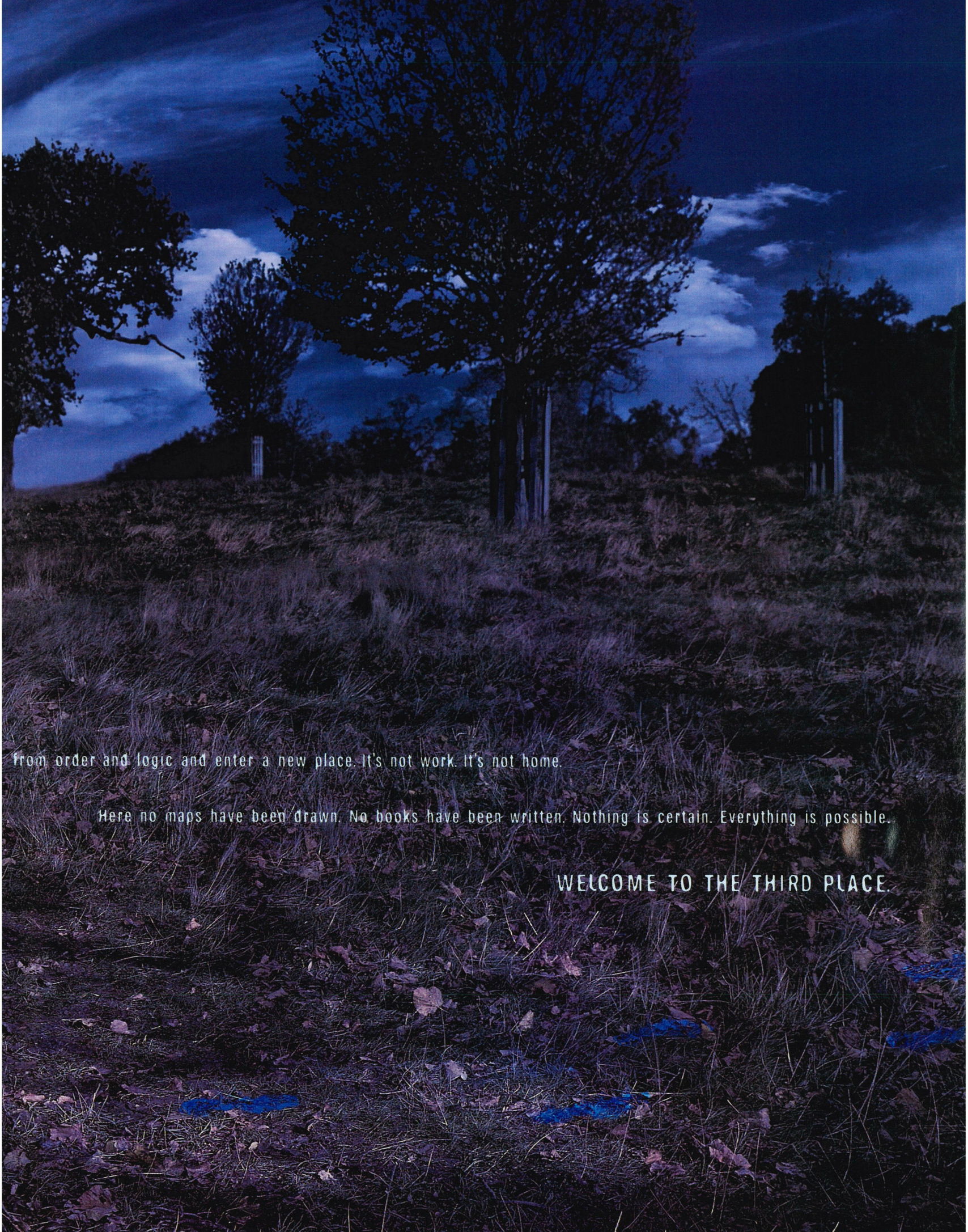
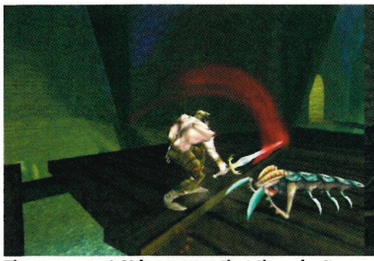
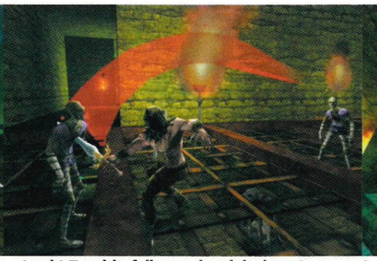
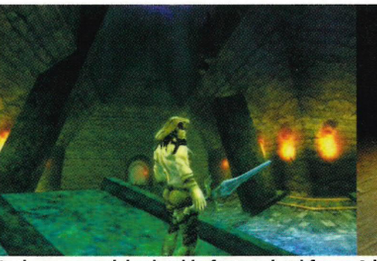
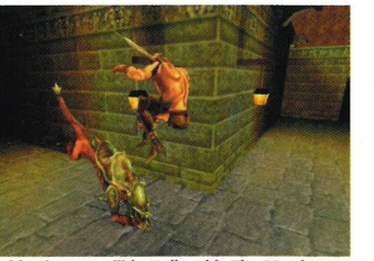

from order and logic and enter a new place. It's not work. It's not home.
Here no maps have been drawn. No books have been written. Nothing is certain. Everything is possible..
WELCOME TO THE THIRD PLACE.

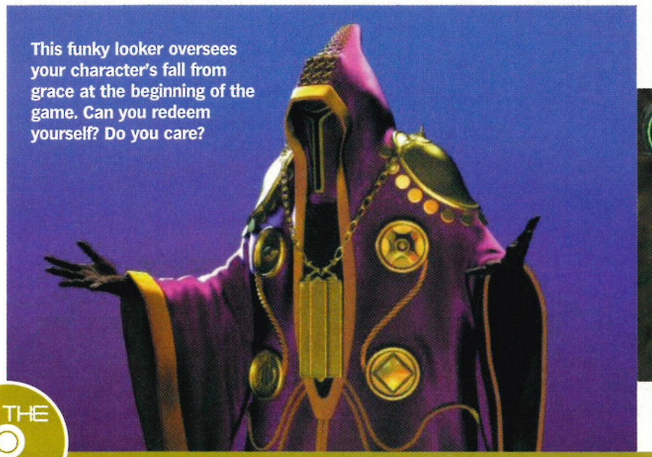
EXIT
Totally obsessed?
Then get all the news, fixtures,
results and interviews on the largest
network of independent fan-sites
TotalFootball.com

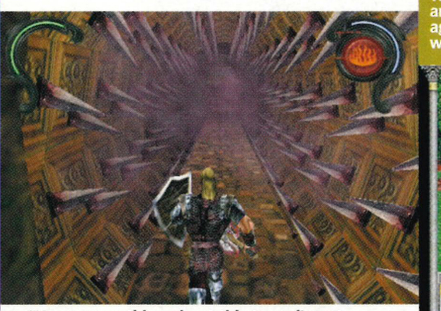

The monsters' AI is so poor that they don't see you until you're upon them...


... Look! Zombie fella on the right hasn't even noticed his mate being diced to death.


Is there a special school in fantasy land for learning to stand around looking moody?


A bit *The Incredible Hulk*, a bit *The Matrix*, a bit ballet, a bit... ugly.


This funky looker oversees your character's fall from grace at the beginning of the game. Can you redeem yourself? Do you care?


"Hmm, something about this tunnel's not quite right. I sense... AAAAAARRRRGH!!!"

ON THE DVD

WARRIORS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

Dungeons, dragons, tunnels, trolls... Smite them all stupid with your big club!

Publisher: 3DO Europe
Developer: 3DO
Price: £39.99
Players: 1
Out: April 2001
Website: www.3do.com/products/playstation/warriors/

Back story
A follow-up to the irredeemably awful *Crusaders Of Might And Magic*, *Warriors* is also set for release on the PSone, and Game Boy Color. We dare say the Nintendo handheld could handle a direct conversion of the PS2 version without so much as breathing heavily.

Though it's more than likely that everyone has a dusty *Warhammer* rulebook lurking in their loft, there has nevertheless always been something slightly off-colour about the swords and sorcery type of fantasy. Whether it's the achingly in-jokey novels of Terry Pratchett, or a gang of spotty weeds sitting around a kitchen table sucking on a twenty-sided die, there's no denying it's all imbued with the distinct tang of anorak. Why this should be is a mystery. Why should, say, a film like *The Matrix* be considered so much cooler than, say, a film like *Dungeons & Dragons?*

Here's a thought; maybe it's the distressing lack of ideas that make up the fantasy genre that makes it a target for ridicule. In other words; when you've seen one paladin having a fight with an orc, you've seem 'em all. It would be nice to report that *Warriors Of Might And Magic* offers a bold new take on the fantasy genre, where a dark deity hasn't brought about the Dark Times to the land of Ardon, and that it doesn't feature a tiresomely familiar lead character called Alleron, who knocks back health potions like Ollie Reed on a big night out. But we can't. Every cliché of the fantasy genre is here. And *Warriors Of Might And Magic* doesn't even have the benefit of being a good game to back up this dearth of innovation.

It's one of those third-person hack and slash-'em-ups, where the hero has to fight his way through dungeons and castles populated by shambling zombies and evil magic wielders. You can pretty much predict the rest of the review; Blah blah, magic potions, blah blah, different swords and shields and three types of attack, blah blah, open treasure chests, blah blah and, indeed, blah. You may view this as glossing over of the details, but what details there are in *Warriors Of Might And Magic* demand to be glossed over; every aspect of this game (with the possible exception of some neat – if occasionally misplaced – sounds and music) is awful.

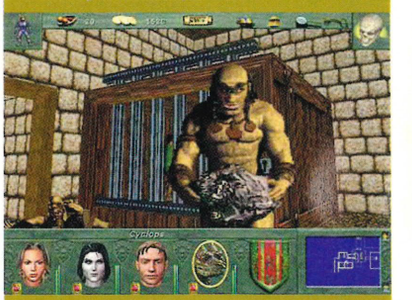
It's essentially a PSone game with hi-res graphics – and not even a latter-day PSone game, but a middle-era PSone game, with all the messed-up camera angles, and glitchy, unresponsive controls you'd expect from that. We're living in the era of the Emotion Engine here; nobody wants games this bad anymore. They should not still be getting made. The only emotions *Warriors Of Might And Magic* is going to provoke are ones of profound anger (at having spent money on it), followed straight up by abject sorrow (that anyone would think this game to be worthy of the PlayStation 2). So bad it's good? Nope, just *so* bad. ☐ **Paul Rose**

NOT THE FIRST

The *Might And Magic* brand has been knocking around for years, starting life more than a decade ago as an under-performing RPG series. Those with a masochistic streak might also like to try:

Might And Magic VI: The Mandate Of Heaven
Stupidly named setting: Enroth
Ruled by: King Roland Ironfist
The enemy: The Temple Of Baa

Might And Magic VII: For Blood And Honour
Stupidly named setting: Erathia
Ruled by: King Nicolai Ironfist
The enemy: Nicholas Gryphonheart



Might And Magic VIII: Day Of The Destroyer
Stupidly named setting: The Dagger Wound Islands, and Jadame
Ruled by: Wilbur Humphrey
The enemy: The Destroyer

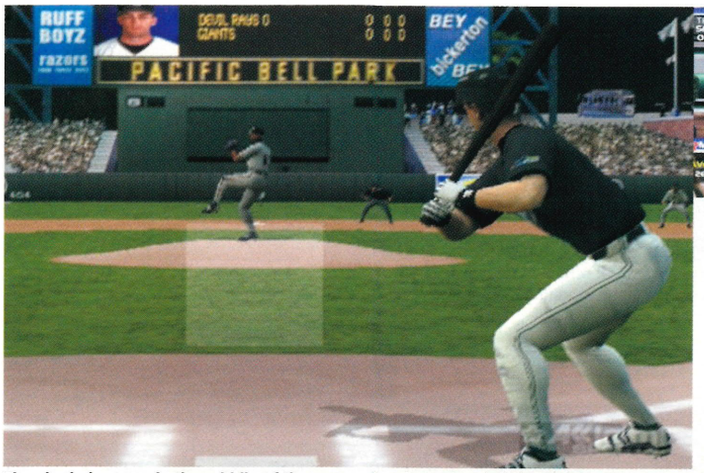
WARRIORS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	You bought a PlayStation 2 so you'd never again have to play a game this bad. Make sure you don't.
- Because we'd been heavily drugged - Because were being held at gunpoint by someone from 3DO	- It's a lazy attempt at a game - No effort to do anything new - Can I go now?	

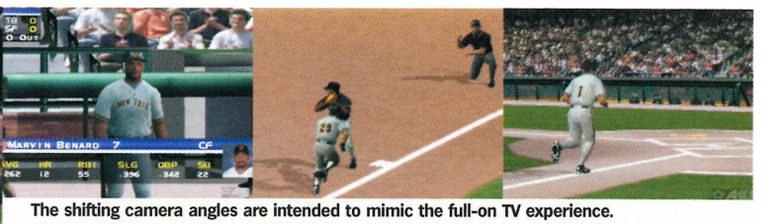
Graphics	Garish colours, jerky animation.	03
Sound	Some sublime atmospheric effects.	06
Gameplay	Hackneyed ideas, and flawed controls.	02
Life span	Not too huge, not too small.	05

03

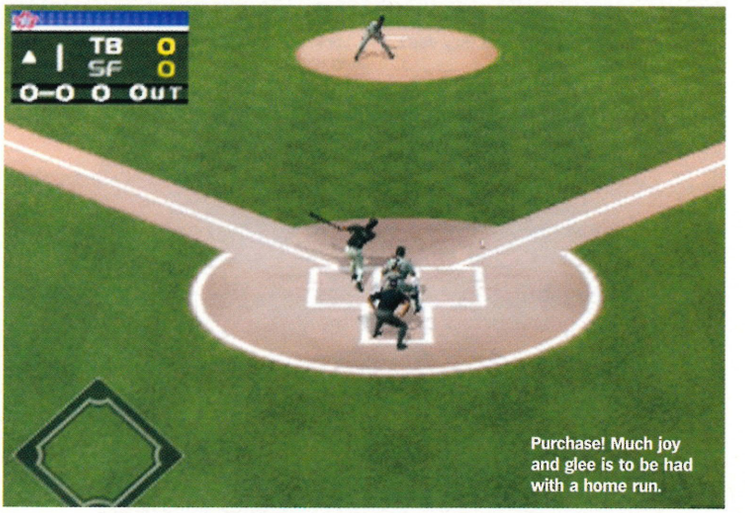
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT



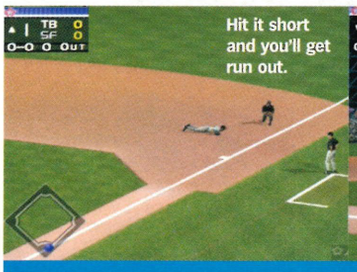
The shaded square in the middle of the screen is where the pitch is aimed.



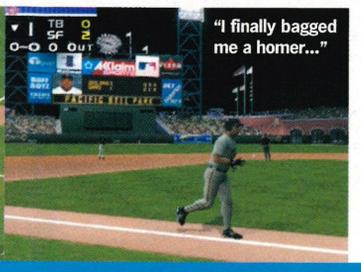
The shifting camera angles are intended to mimic the full-on TV experience.



Purchase! Much joy and glee is to be had with a home run.



Hit it short and you'll get run out.



"I finally bagged me a homer..."

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2002

Acclaim pops the EA Sports monopoly bubble with a well-crafted curveball.

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim Studios Austin
Price: £34.99
Players: 1-2
Out: Now
Web site: www.acclaimsports.com/asb2002/index.html

Back story
Officially licensed by Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, this is the PS2 inception of Acclaim's lightly-celebrated *All-Star Baseball* series which originally took off on PSone. It's more feature-heavy than EA Sports' US-only *Triple Play Baseball* and the developer has 'taken a pacey, graphically-led approach over a straight-faced sim.

Choose your cliché: American cricket or rounders for fat lads. Whatever the early-hours Channel 4 Yankophiles might insist, baseball has never really achieved much of a US-UK crossover. It probably has a lot to do with the fact that the Yanks, God bless their goldfish-like attention spans, seem to view the on-field action as purely incidental to the business of Bud-guzzling, corn dog-snaffling and pointing at the dancing, drama-school drop-out with a big baseball for a head. We just don't get it. Much as the Americans just wouldn't get, say, *Viz*, or *The Royle Family*. Or tripe.

And so, into this atmosphere of cultural indifference, we have a face-off between EA Sports' *Triple Play Baseball* and Acclaim's *All-Star Baseball 2002*. This one is the easily the best for more rounded gamers. Hardcore baseball bores will favour the more heavily stattified *Triple Play Baseball*, but *All-Star Baseball 2002* looks great, is easy to pick up and play, and, after an hour or two of acclimatising to the relentless lingo, it gets dangerously close to being compulsive.

Particularly impressive is the variety of modes. Batting Practice gets you to grips with the refreshingly subtle slugging system; Quick Play is the standard exhibition match entry-point for brave rookies, and, at the other end of the spectrum, there's a huge mix-and-match array of standard and customised leagues – including Season, Series and Classic. Although only one human-controlled team can be put through a season, the Player Draft option allows you to pick your own individual bunch from all the players available. For the real junkies, there's a solid Team Management mode, with all the usual opportunities for complex subbing and hitter-to-pitcher matching.

It looks fabulous, with sharp animations (although running is, as ever, amusingly constipated) highly unnecessary stadium detail and superbly surly players. In fact Acclaim insists that there are more polygons in a player's head than were used to create entire stadiums in the previous-generation games. But the bells and whistles are backed up by solid, accessible gameplay which can be hiked up in line with the player's skill and general affinity with the game. On Rookie level, batting is a basic business of pressing the swing button at roughly the right time and directing your hit in a general direction. But, turn off the Easy Batting option and up the difficulty, and, increasingly, it's the way you hit it that counts (a Power or Contact swing; into the ground for a quick, sneaky gain or high and mighty for a home-run?). Pitching is more a case of finding a style, with an impressive range of esoteric ball-chucking options. Would sir prefer a standard or flattening curveball?

Whatever. It's baseball. And if you're the type who doesn't find Homer Simpson's temporarily teetotal observation ("I never realised how boring this game was...") even slightly amusing, then buy, buy, buy. Otherwise, test your Statto tendencies with a curious rental. ☐ **Andy Lowe**

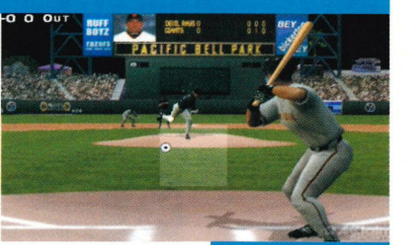
ALL STAR BASEBALL 2002

Why we'd buy it:	**Why we'd leave it:**	**Easy to dive into, but with plenty of hidden depth. A sensibly designed, all-round game of baseball. Of course, it helps if baseball is, like, your thing...**
- It's the most immediately playable PS2 baseball game, like ever - Good player animation	- We were English and prefer football and darts - We were American and preferred the stat-heavy EA Sports effort	

Graphics	Cute hitting, pitching, strutting and scowling	08
Sound	Good enough. Distracted commentary	06
Gameplay	One guy throws a ball, another guy hits it	07
Life span	Lots of lengthy league options	08

07

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT



A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME

Some facts to bore your baseball 'buddies' with down the boozer...

1. The first professional baseball team, the Cincinnati Red Stockings, was founded by George Wright – the son of an English cricketer.

2. A man named John Montgomery Ward invented the pitching mound – and also pitched the second perfect game in history.

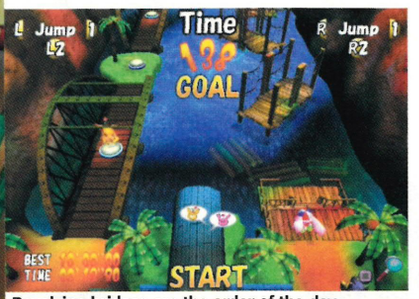
3. Famous baseball player King Kelly was regularly accompanied off the field by a black monkey and a Japanese valet.

4. Another famous baseball player, Harmon Killebrew, when asked what his hobbies were, said, "Well, I like to wash the dishes".

5. In 1936, the most famous baseball player, Babe Ruth, requested tickets for the Yankee's season opener, The House That Ruth Built. The management asked him to send a cheque!

Pull the log out of the way and Chestnut can pass.

A giant totem pole makes a devilish enemy and only team work can get you past its evil wooden clutches.



Revolving bridges are the order of the day.

Defeating a polar bear in rubber rings is novel.

Shove planks in the chattering skull to aid Chestnut.

The rabbits take control of one wing each reminding people never to fly Kuri Kuri Airlines.

KURI KURI MIX

The moon's gone missing and only two slightly greedy rabbits can rescue it. No, us neither...

Publisher: Empire Interactive
Developer: From Software
Price: £29.99
Players: 1-4
Out: May 2001
Web site: www.kurikurimix.com

Back story
Originally conceived for a Japanese market only, *Kuri Kuri Mix* was quickly given a release date for the West and was renamed *The Adventures Of Cookie And Cream* for the US. The game has kept its original Japanese name for the UK release but Cookie has been renamed Chestnut. We have no idea why.

As strange as it may seem, a potentially saccharine-soaked game starring "two bunny wunnies with cutesy doe eyes on a magical quest armed with nothing but love and a trumpet" isn't as wretched as it seems. In fact, *Kuri Kuri Mix* is a darkly comic escapade laced with an ingenious dose of absolute, treasure-grabbing greed.

Chestnut and Cream are flopsy friends sent on a quest to find the moon which has dramatically refused to turn up for work, thus plunging the world into complete tidal disarray. Stupid bloody rock. Beginning their quest on the outskirts of a jungle C&C must work in co-operation through the thorny thickets and crocodile-infested pools of the steamy green hell until they get one step nearer to discovering the whereabouts of the lost lunar lump. And co-operation is most definitely the key word. Without it our two fuzzy chums end up either shredded or bubbling under in a pool of stinking pestilence.

Each area (for they delve into worlds such as Underwater World, Music World, Desert, Arctic, Trick and Magic World after conquering the Jungle) is divided in two down the middle with Chestnut and Cream placed on either side. In order to make progress up screen they have to help each other out of difficult situations. During early stages this involves little more than Chestnut throwing a switch on his side to open a door for Cream but things soon descend into hell bent lunacy. The fellas have to steer one leg each of a giant robot, play trumpets in unison, dance on a giant circular piano to form the correct set of notes to unlock a door, even lasso vultures around the neck in order to form floating stepping stones.

There is an ingenuity and simplicity about *Kuri Kuri Mix* that speaks volumes. You simply have to keep playing it, forever working your way closer to your goal, discussing with your partner just what course of action you both need to take in order to prevent bunny guts spilling everywhere as well as juggling the ever decreasing time with the prospect of filling your selfish paws with treasures. Do you forfeit a few precious seconds in order to reach a huge pile of cash? Do you think that Cream can hold on to the greasy rope a split second longer while you dart off for personal glory? Well, do you?

If the characters strays too far apart then the screen will split in two for your convenience.

Ideally *Kuri Kuri* should be played by two people at once (a single player can simultaneously control them both by using the analogue sticks) because single play lacks the dark undercurrent of greed but even then it is so visually lush and ingenious the detraction is minimal.

It's good to see titles like this coming forward. While it will no doubt be overshadowed by the the likes of *GT3* around, it will certainly find a strong fan base and reward them well for buying it. Wholesome backstabbing fun. ☐ **Ben Lawrence**

DOUBLE SPEAK

Three brilliant partnerships that should be made into a game. ***(Ben, see me now... – Ed)***

1. Paul Daniels and The Lovely Debbie McGee™
Paul subjects The Lovely Debbie McGee™ to increasingly dangerous tricks in a style similar to Konami's *Track & Field*. Can you shove swords into a box containing TLDM™ accurately enough not to stab her through the spleen? And how long can she hold her breath in a tank of acid?

2. Chuckle Brothers
That wacky pair of slightly disturbing old men must work in co-operation to overcome everyday tasks in a 3D platformer similar to the recent Psone game *Incredible Crisis*. Can you prevent them rolling a pram down a hill into a stream of rush hour traffic?

3. Johnny and Denise
Can you keep a sinking ship afloat long enough until your contract runs out? Not if that pesky blonde sidekick has anything to do with it. While you're bailing out she'll be throwing retchingly awful innuendos at you so fast you either have to shoot her or take refuge in the fact she'll never work again.

PHOTO: ALLSTAR

KURI KURI MIX

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	A bizarre blend of two player co-operation and bloody-minded greed. *Kuri Kuri* is a worthwhile addition to any collection.
- Different from so many other games - 50 levels ensure longevity	- A little too mad for some people's tastes - Best played in two-player mode	

Graphics	So sweet, so cute, so goddam nice	08
Sound	Incidental but pleasant enough	06
Gameplay	Co-operation, greed and treasures galore	08
Life span	Easy first levels shorten its length too much	06

07

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

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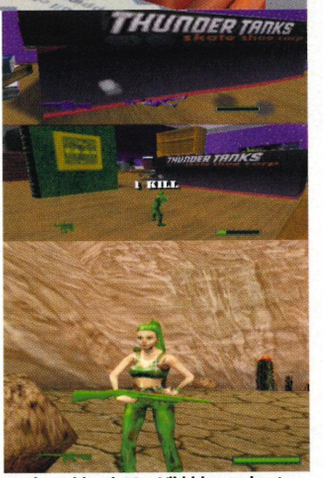
Flooded bogs and the living dead... Sarge has his work cut out for him.



Rack and load. Mrs Vikki in workout mode and ready to rumble.

ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES 2

The latest campaign opens a new front on PS2. Make that an affront.

Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Price: £34.99
Players: 1-4
Out: Now
Web site: www.3do.com/products/playstation/sarges_heroes2/

Back story
"Real Combat. Plastic Men." A simple ad slogan that has spawned a behemoth of a franchise on PSone. It was inevitable that *Army Men* would take the fight to PS2. You may not be able to get blood out of a stone, but you can milk plastic.

Taking the third-person shoot-'em-up route favoured by *Army Men 3D* and the original *Sarge's Heroes*, *SH2* concocts a new, but not necessarily fresh excuse to reduce tan troops to molten puddles in both the real and plastic realms. This time Sarge has a playable sidekick in the shape of his injection moulded sweetheart Vikki Grimm, but aside from this novelty, *SH2*'s gameplay appears to have dug in and scarcely advanced an inch since its predecessor was first deployed. Toggle between weapons, roam environments destroying enemy units, solve the occasional puzzle and then do it all again. And again. It's a brand of repetition that's done the addictive *Medal of Honor* franchise no harm whatsoever. Where *SH2* shoots itself in the foot is by buying into its plastic protagonists' inherent cheapness and programming the playing experience sadly to match.

Graphically, the game pays lip service to its next-gen host and smooths a few edges, but that's about it. The lack of visual innovation is never more telling than in the 'real' world where Sarge is dwarfed by depressingly textureless objects that starkly draw attention to the wireframe skeletons lurking just polygons below the surface. What's more, the shocking collision detection leads to the kind of deadly frustration poisonous to any enjoyable sesh in front of the box. But then again, with a frequently spasmodic camera threatening to go AWOL at regular intervals, you may not even get to see the object you're standing next to. Enemy soldiers too, have a habit of appearing straight out of thin air while approaching their prescribed locations. You can almost see the line of code that triggers them. And, as for your weapon's cross hairs? Aside from letting you know which way you're facing, they're rarely of any consistent use.

Toy scaled warfare is an ace idea and with PS2's raw power, 3DO could have pulled the franchise up by its boot straps and made good on its early promise. Imagine giant humans interacting with environments and battlefields oblivious to the conflict raging under their noses. Hell, how about plastic soldiers that actually melt convincingly? That there's still some fun to be found playing this game with all its inherent flaws is a testament to the ability of a good premise to blindly overwhelm otherwise lax execution. So, maybe *Army Men* will live to see another day after all. On this evidence though, Sarge and his heroes have got the fight of their lives on their hands. ☐ **Paul Fitzpatrick**

ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES 2

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	If 3DO focused on quality over quantity, bagging a significant victory should have been easy. This poorly realised shooter will recruit few gamers.
- Top idea for a game - Family friendly deathmatch option	- Camera struggles to keep up - Graphics don't push PS2 at all - Collision detection is ropey beyond belief	

Graphics	There's no excuse for this	03
Sound	Music grates. Sound effects are flimsy	03
Gameplay	Simple gameplay let down by bad execution	02
Life span	There's a fair bit here, but will you persevere?	04

03

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

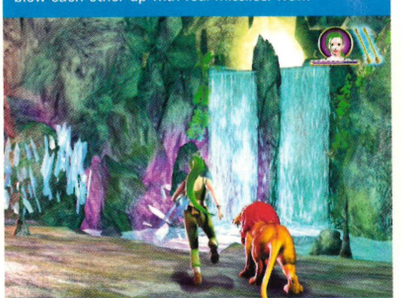
DA-DA-DAH WAR!

What is it good for? An onslaught of games based around plastic soldiers actually. Here's a taste of what came before and what's coming soon...

Army Men 3D (PSone) Look! They're like soldiers, but they're toys as well! And they can gratuitously kill each other with a variety of weapons! Cool!

World War: Land Sea Air (PSone) Look! It's like an *Army Men* game, but with real time strategy bits! And the cool thing is they're actually toys! Crazy!

Army Men: Air Attack 2 (PS2) Look! They're like gunship helicopters, but they're toys as well! And they blow each other up with real missiles! Wow!



Portal Runner (PS2) Look! It's like an *Army Men* game but with Vikki Grimm! And a lion! And time travelling! But no army! But the cool thing is etc etc...

PS one TM

Edited by: Ryan Butt/Lee Hall

A crack marksman hits the target and signals the end of another bloody incursion.

The door opened and what did we see? Strangely dressed men shooting at us.

TIME CRISIS: PROJECT TITAN

In days of old, when light guns sold, and stealth was not invented...

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Namco
Price: £29.99
Players: 1
Out: Now

Before *Silent Scope* brought stealth to light gun shooters, *Time Crisis* was king of the cabinets in arcades across the land. And with PS2 gamers reduced to scrolling frantically around the screen with the analogue sticks in the home version of *Silent Scope*, Namco's third instalment in the older series is a welcome arrival for light gun fans.

The trouble with *Time Crisis: Project Titan* is that the current vogue for stealth-based games means you feel almost guilty standing toe-to-toe with a raft of enemies. From the word go, as the obligatory framed secret agent, you barge into combat, parachuting onto a luxury yacht only to settle down and begin cracking bullets left, right and centre.

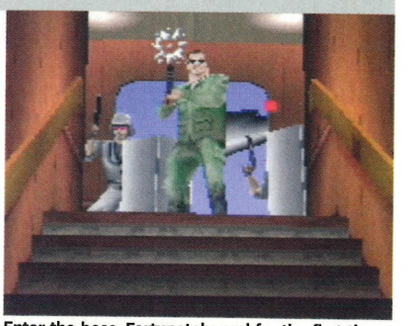
Such action was the staple of gamers when Emotion Engines weren't even a twinkle in Sony's eye and, of course, the game is not simply a case of standing in one place and firing wildly. As with earlier versions you can duck for cover to reload and evade the fire of your enemies who carry various ordnance, from handguns to bazookas and molotov cocktails. There's even an irate chef chucked in for good measure who's a dab hand with kitchen knives.

//You can actually make a basic choice of where to hide for the first time in the trilogy//

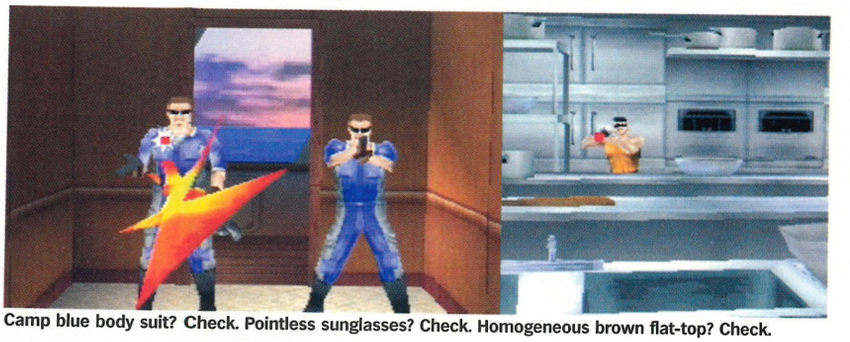
What's more, as you face bosses you can actually make a basic choice of where to hide for the first time in the trilogy. While this means you can always wangle a clean line of fire it has little tactical impact on the battle as it does nothing to confuse your foe or give you any other advantage. Other than that you are directed by fixed movement, remaining in the first-person perspective as you go, once you've cleared each section of an area.

The game is broken into two modes, which offer little variation – the only differences between the Story mode and the Time Trial mode is that in the latter your time constraints are more stringent and the only way to die is by timing out. Luckily there are still folks belting about who, once shot, relinquish time bonuses, but beware of the men in pink jumpsuits – they are deadly accurate and must be eliminated first.

The game is very short and the functional graphics and occasionally iffy collision detection mean it's just not quite worth playing with a pad. Furthermore, In a game short on innovation, the lack of a two-player mode is a glaring omission. For light gun lovers only. ☐ **LH**



Enter the boss. Fortunately, and for the first time, you'll be able to choose where you hide from him



Camp blue body suit? Check. Pointless sunglasses? Check. Homogeneous brown flat-top? Check.

PS one TM

TIME CRISIS: PROJECT TITAN

Graphics A little rough around the edges	07
Sound Cheesy baddies and ricochets	06
Gameplay Addictive but somewhat unvaried	06
Life span A couple of afternoons worth	05

With a light gun its certainly fun, but it's too short, repetitive and lacks all-important two-player fun.

06

VERDICT

RUGRATS IN PARIS

Gibbering brats run riot in Reptar Land.

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Avalanche
Price: £29.99
Players: 1-2
Out: Now

Tying in with the forthcoming cinematic outing, *Rugrats In Paris* places your chosen rat in the world's most unpopular theme park, Reptar Land. Far from a hive of family fun, the park is empty apart from you, making this a solitary experience.

The aim is to scurry through the park participating in sub-games to bolster your ticket collection before trading it in for some nifty toys. Differences between the six playable toddlers are few other than looks and some tailored, infuriatingly-looped samples. With a vast park to run riot in and enough mini-games to stave off the tedium however, under fives will blow milkshake through their nostrils at such hilarity. ☐ **RB**

These stunning good looks can't compensate for *Rugrats in Paris'* poorly designed controls.

PSone™

The graphics are neat enough and some of the sub-games are worth the entrance fee alone. But with cumbersome controls and irritating samples this will ultimately make you ratty.

06

VERDICT

THE LION KING: SIMBA'S MIGHTY ADVENTURE

Can the cat cut it on PSone? Purr-lease.

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Paradox
Price: £29.99
Players: 1
Out: Now

Six years ago, during the hype that surrounded *The Lion King's* cinematic release, came a rather good 16 bit game that had the looks, the sounds and the appeal to buck the trend of movie tie-ins.

Apart from shifting uncomfortably into 3D, this game is strikingly similar to its older cousin. Chuck dodgy controls and awful collision detection into the mix however and you'll be reaching for the nearest elephant gun to break the 'circle of life' and put this game out of its misery. This is the most criminally yawnsome beast we have played for some time. All you do is run, jump around and bottom bounce any creature that poses a threat to the would-be king of the jungle. Dull. ☐ **RB**

Remember the thrills of the cartoon movie epic? Good, because they're totally absent here.

PSone™

Nothing new or original here, just the same old platform-by-numbers formula that has bored us senseless for years. The controls are dire and even the shift into 3D does nothing for the cause.

03

VERDICT

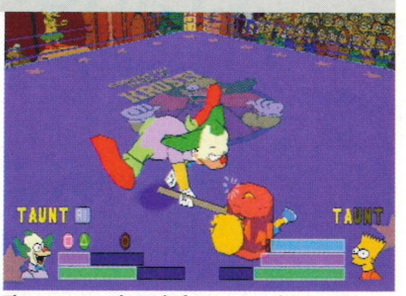
THE SIMPSONS WRESTLING

This deserves to be Homer Ione.

Publisher: EA Games
Developer: Big Ape/Fox Interactive
Price: £29.99
Players: 1-2
Out: Now

How can a well-respected show such as *The Simpsons* lend its good name to a package as tasteless as this? As any member of the Simpsons' clan (or as other default characters such as Apu, Krusty, Willie and Barney) you simply have to duff your way past all-comers in a bid for supremacy. The moves are comical and the sound samples appropriate, but as a game this is woeful.

The characters are clumsy recreations of their small-screen counterparts and the collision detection nearly non-existent. *The Simpsons* succeeds through multi-layered cultural observations and political incorrectness – things not present in this one-dimensional farce. ☐ **RB**



The most consistently funny TV series ever is done a total injustice on PSone.

PSone™

A sad cash-in on *The Simpsons'* good name and the current wave of wrestlemania that fails to deliver. It's bad to watch, unresponsive to control and a complete waste of time and energy.

04

VERDICT

ALSO RELEASED...

Yet more F1 thrills and spills in the enjoyable **F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX 2000...** Mud-encrusted bikers with a death wish in **SUPERCROSS...** Limited running and shooting cartoon capery in **BUZZ LIGHTYEAR OF STAR COMMAND...** Contender for worst football game ever (and it's a crowded field) in **EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE...** Cowboys and bum-cleavage in **BOB THE BUILDER: CAN WE FIX IT?** And a wealth of cheap £9.99 re-releases, the best being **TOMB RAIDER II, BISHI BASHI SPECIAL, LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER** and **INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD...** For all the latest PSone news, reviews, previews and playable demos see **OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE**...

PSone™

ROUNDUP

NEWS

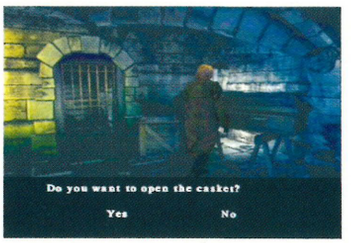
THE ITALIAN JOB

Publisher SCi will release a PSone tie-in with the cult Michael Caine film, *The Italian Job.* Featuring expansive levels set in Sixties London, Turin and the Alps, the game is shaping up as a *Driver*-style affair centred on an Italian Job mode in which you form your team, perform the heist and escape, as well as several stunt and time trial challenges. Listen out for the famous ditty, *Self Preservation Society* when the game hits in September, with a PlayStation 2 version to follow.

PREVIEW

MORE TONY HAWK'S

The best extreme sports sim on the planet, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2,* is to be followed by an expansion pack on PSone, promising more levels and new tricks to keep fans happy until the PS2 version, due for release this winter. Activision has not yet confirmed an on-sale date for the cleverly-named *Tony Hawk's 2.5,* but the imminent arrival of *Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX* from the same studio means it's likely to be later this year. Elsewhere, Acclaim will release a *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX* add-on this summer.



PREVIEW

ALONE IN THE DARK IV

It's subtitled, *The New Nightmare* and publisher Infogrames is billing *AID IV* as a return to form for the moody, French-developed horror. The game is full of atmosphere and puzzling and has the added bonus of enabling you to play through twice with different characters. Murders, nice lighting and good-looking backdrops combine for a terrifying yet engaging game. A PS2 version will follow.

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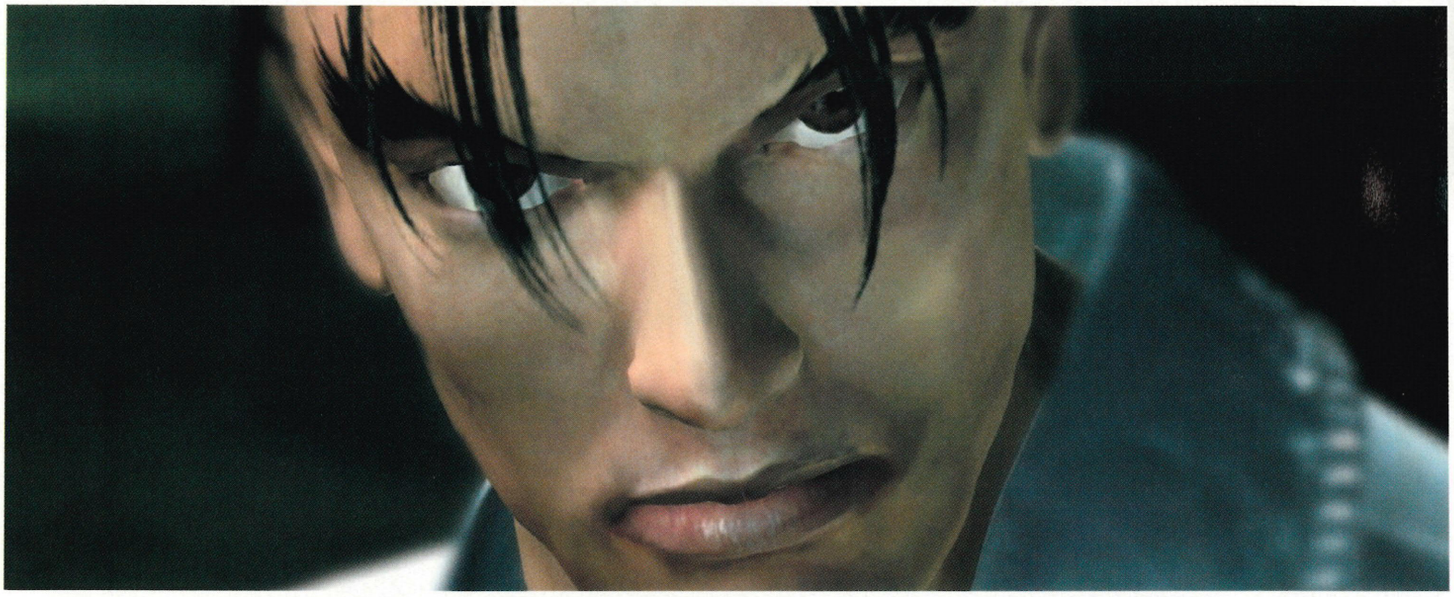


1. You don't like games.

Edited by: Sam Richards

media

DVD/INTERNET/PRINT/MUSIC

PS2 doesn't just play games, you know. Here's some other stuff you might like...

DVD text: Sam Richards/Lee Hart

GALAXY QUEST

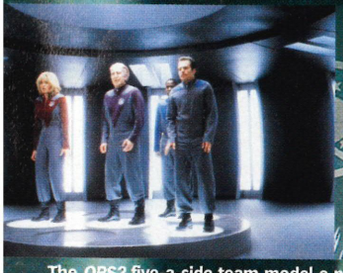
DreamWorks/£19.99/Out now

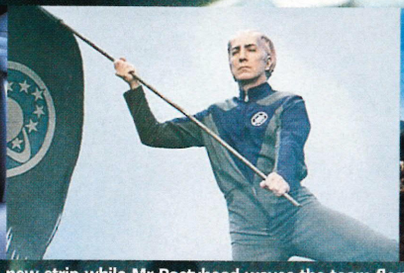
Film: As long as there are lonely male adolescents on Planet Earth there will be the need for grown men to slap pasties on their foreheads and pretend to pilot interplanetary craft in the name of *Star Trek*, *Babylon 5* or the like. *Galaxy Quest*'s inspired spoof could have lazily denigrated the space sci-fi genre and its much-maligned fans but instead it opts for a beautifully-observed, loving parody.

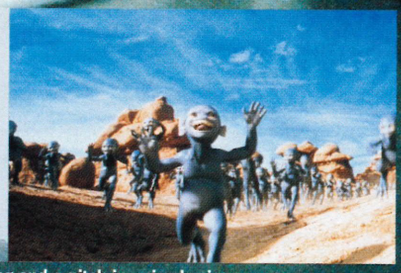
Sigourney Weaver and Tim '*Home Improvements*' Allen are superb as the bickering lead actors in a *Trek*-a-like TV series (the titular *Galaxy Quest*) but the show is stolen by Alan Rickman. A failed Shakespearean condemned to imprisonment within a stupid prosthetic head, he breaks down pathetically at a fans' convention but eventually emerges as the hero of the hour. Although cynical about their naff TV roles and the geeky relentlessness of the series' followers, the actors have the tables turned when they're beamed into a 'real-life' space war by the hapless Thermian aliens. Naturally, it's the anally retentive teen fans who save the day with their obsessive knowledge of *Galaxy Quest* guff. **SR**

Features: The extensive on-location documentary is more promotional than insightful and the cutting room floor snippets – though interesting – really could have done with some illustrative commentary.

Verdict: A film to brighten the lives of maligned sci-fi obsessives everywhere, and damn funny with it. **8/10**





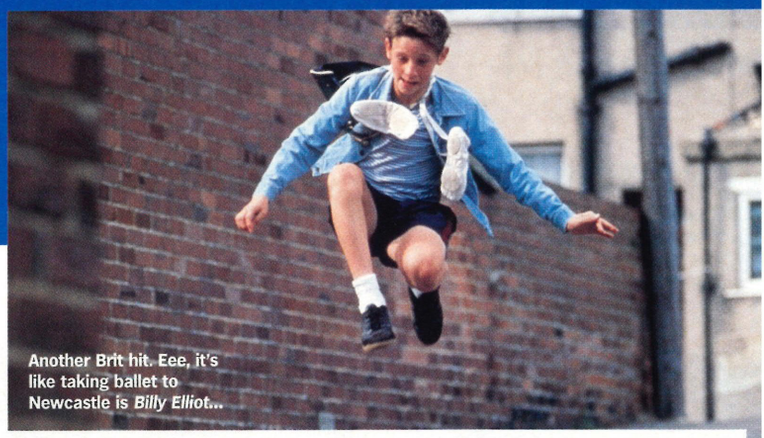


The *OPS2* five-a-side team model a new strip while Mr Pastyhead waves the team flag and a pitch invasion begins...

Tim Allen is stuck in a naff TV series. Well, we've all seen *Home Improvements*...

PHOTOS: MURRAY/CLOSE/DREAMWORKS

"Mmm, the sweet smell of gaseous effluent." Björk in another 'Mad? Me?' moment.



Another Brit hit. Eee, it's like taking ballet to Newcastle is *Billy Elliot*...

DANCER IN THE DARK

Film Four/£19.99/Out now

Film: The polar opposite worlds of Dogme and the Hollywood song and dance extravaganza come together in cinema's first example of a musical tragedy. It's 1960s small-town America and Selma (Björk) is a single mother rapidly going blind and working every hour God sends to save money for an operation that will prevent her son losing his sight from the same hereditary disease. When her savings are stolen, Selma is forced into an act of desperation that leads to a quite devastating conclusion.

Similar in theme to director Lars Von Trier's earlier melodrama, *Breaking the Waves* – an innocent in a harsh world sacrificing herself for the good of a loved one – but with songs that make events even more heart-rendingly poignant, Björk carries the film with a remarkable performance. **LH**

Features: An interview with Von Trier in which he stresses his desire to make a serious musical that would be the antithesis of the fluffy nature of traditional Hollywood.

Verdict: A unique, memorable film that's guaranteed to break your heart. **9/10**

BILLY ELLIOT

Columbia TriStar/£19.99/Out now

Film: It seems to be an unwritten rule that any decent, award-winning modern Brit-flick has to be a 'grim oop North' feelgood fable where the plucky working classes triumph over adversity. *Brassed Off*, *The Full Monty* and *Little Voice* (to name a few) have led the way and the latest to follow this successful formula is *Billy Elliot*.

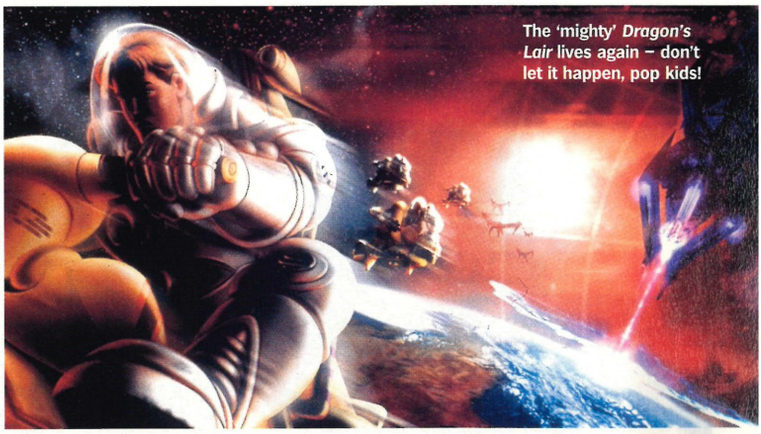
The story is familiar by now – young Geordie lad swaps boxing for ballet, overcomes his father's disapproval and goes for a place at the Royal Ballet School, all played against the backdrop of the 1984 miners' strike. But with fantastic performances from Jamie Bell, Julie Walters and Gary Lewis bolstered by an irresistibly uplifting theme, *Billy Elliot* is a film you'll watch again with a smile on your face. **LH**

Features: A theatrical trailer and a few production notes but the only worthwhile extra is *Billy Elliot: Breaking Free*, a 20 minute documentary featuring interviews with director Stephen Daldry and his stars.

Verdict: Not up to the mighty *Brassed Off* or even *The Full Monty*, but great British feelgood entertainment, nonetheless. **8/10**

Pierce is lowered into a pit of snarling Timothy Daltons...

PHOTO: PICTORIAL PRESS



The 'mighty' *Dragon's Lair* lives again – don't let it happen, pop kids!

TOMORROW NEVER DIES

MGM/£19.99/Out now

Film: After *GoldenEye* revived Bond's flagging fortunes, this 18th adventure in the franchise regressed to the bad old Timothy Dalton days. For what it's worth, the story revolves around mad media magnate Elliot Carver who sees China as the final piece in his global communications jigsaw and decides to start World War III to boost TV ratings and persuade the Chinese to accept his blood money. It's up to Pierce Brosnan and his equivalent from China's secret service, Michelle Yeoh, to foil these plans.

Jonathon Pryce is too much of a wet blanket as the Murdoch-alike Carver to really drive the movie to its Good versus Evil climax, and although there are a couple of excellent action sequences – the remote-controlled BMW chase (wish fulfilment for tech fetishists) a particular stand-out – *Tomorrow Never Dies* is way down the list of best Bond's. **LH**

Features: Includes two commentaries, a clever storyboard/movie comparison, and a short interview with composer David Arnold but the main event is an in-depth documentary, *The Secrets Of 007*, looking back at the history of Bond focusing on the villains, the girls, the gadgets and the stunts.

Verdict: A mediocre Bond lacking the style and humour of Connery's heyday. **5/10**

TITAN A.E.

Fox/£19.99/Out now

Film: The year is 3028. Evil alien race The Drej destroy the Earth in a vicious onslaught, leaving the few human survivors to drift through the galaxy in fear of their continued existence. One survivor is Cale (voiced by Matt Damon) and it's his mission to find mankind's salvation, the legendary spaceship Titan A.E. (After Earth) while embarking on a voyage of self-discovery.

Ageing gamers may recognise the name of *Titan A.E.*'s co-director, Don Bluth, as the man who gave us the visually startling (but utterly banal) eight-bit game, *Dragon's Lair*. Ironically, his latest movie is a mirror image: it's mixture of hand-drawn 2D characters and three dimensional CGI environments. It looks great but, in terms of content, *Titan A.E.* is absolutely hopeless – failing to generate in 90 minutes the kind of excitement *Battle of the Planets* was able to achieve in just 15. **LH**

Features: A Fox Kids featurette which goes behind-the-scenes at Fox's animation studios and interviews with the film's voice artistes. Also includes the *Over My Head* theme music video from dire Californian popsters, Lit.

Verdict: Voices by Matt Damon, Drew Barrymore, Bill Pullman. Plotting by numbers. **5/10**

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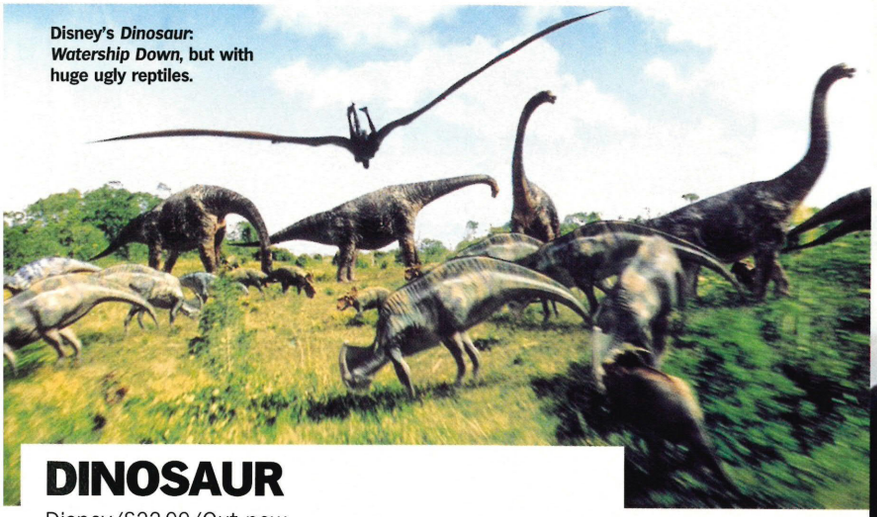

Disney's *Dinosaur*: *Watership Down*, but with huge ugly reptiles.

DINOSAUR

Disney/£22.99/Out now

Film: The first wholly CGI movie to plod out of the House Of Mouse, *Dinosaur* follows Aladar the iguanadon on his journey from a hapless egg separated from the tribe, to hatching and growing up in the care of a family of loving lemurs. Their happy existence is torn asunder when a meteor shower hits the planet and they're forced to embark on a treacherous quest to discover the safe haven of the nesting grounds.

While it certainly looks impressive, *Dinosaur* has had its thunder stolen by the BBC's visually similar and narratively superior *Walking With Dinosaurs*. What's more, the realistic look of the movie just makes it all the more preposterous when the creatures begin spouting the kind of trite nonsense that passes for dialogue in modern Disney animations. **LH**

Features: Behind-the-scenes viewing mode where you can watch development footage relating to the current on-screen events. A music video by non-entities Orange Blue.

Verdict: Under 10s might just enjoy it. **4/10**

Back on the chain gang: Clooney and co in the Coen's Deep South odyssey.

O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?

Momentum/£19.99/Out now

Film: After the spliffed-up detective farce involving German nihilists and pederast bowling champions that was *The Big Lebowski*, you can barely expect the Coen brothers to embrace convention. *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* transposes Homer's *Odyssey* to a fantasy depression-era Deep South setting and turns it into a musical comedy starring George Clooney. John Turturro and Tim Blake Nelson play the stooges to Clooney's, coiffure-obsessed Ulysses Everett McGill as the three abscond together from a chain gang in search of buried treasure.

However, Everett's motivations lie elsewhere – preventing the mother of his six children from marrying a man named Waldrip, to be precise. In the course of their voyage the intrepid trio cadge a lift with a manic depressive bankrobber, fall foul of John Goodman's quick-witted Klan chief and find time to record a hit single as the Soggy Bottom Boys. The sirens and the cyclops are there, but you suspect Homer might have been a little bit bewildered by the level of poetic licence taken. **SR**

Features: In amongst the interactive menus are a selection of interview snippets with the primary stars and with Joel and Ethan Coen themselves. However, these don't make up for the lack of a Directors' commentary.

Verdict: The Coen brothers casually chalk-up another fantastical, phantasmagorical hit. Own this DVD. **8/10**

Next year's fashion for Media studies students revealed in *Lawrence Of Arabia*.

TOP 10 EPICS ON DVD

Lawrence Of Arabia

Columbia TriStar/£24.99

Film: David Lean's moving biopic of maverick soldier TE Lawrence is the epicest of epics. Shot on location in the desert, a cast of, literally, thousands was used to illustrate the loneliness, perversity and determination of one man who took on the Axis, the Arabs, the Allies and – ultimately – himself and beat them all. Genius.

Features: *Making Of* documentary. Interview with Steven Spielberg. Four featurettes

Henry V

Carlton Home Entertainment/£9.99

Film: Forget Branagh and follow Laurence Olivier once more into the breach in what is arguably the best rendition of Shakespeare on film. The bard's tale of English triumph over the French was made as World War II propaganda by Olivier but easily transcends its modest origins.

Features: None

Spartacus

Columbia TriStar/£19.99

Film: Kubrick's masterful true story of the slave who almost brought the mighty Roman empire to its knees, is the guidebook for any wannabe epic film-makers. Sweeping story, great performances, grand battles, memorable set-pieces and quotable dialogue – this has the lot. All together now, "I'm Spartacus!"

Features: None.

El Cid

Universal Pictures/£16.99

Film: Charlton Heston stars as the eponymous hero, the 11th Century Spanish warrior who is fighting for his country's liberation from the Moors. With pomp, pageant, mass battles and Sophia Loren as the love interest, *El Cid* is a complete visual wonder.

Features: Picture gallery. History section

Waterloo

Columbia TriStar/£19.99

Film: With battle scenes so huge they had to innovatively shoot from a helicopter, this recreation of the thwarting of Napoleon's ambition is simply majestic. Gasp as the brave redcoats foil the French cavalry, gape at the sheer scale of it all.

Features: Theatrical trailer

Ran

Fox/Price: TBC

Film: Kurasowa blended *King Lear* seamlessly with medieval Japanese history to create this insightful tale, the moral of which is you reap what you sow. In this case the sowing is beautiful, bloody and violent, the reaping even more so. A true masterpiece.

Features: Theatrical trailers

The Last Emperor

Second Sight/£17.99

Film: The true story of Pu Yi, the last emperor of China, sheltered in the Forbidden City then deposed and forced to come to terms with an alien outside world. Bertolucci's film is rather cold and distant but it's an undeniably absorbing history lesson.

Features: Trailers

Braveheart

Fox/£22.99

Film: The legendary story of William Wallace leading the Scots against the evil English in the 13th Century is reduced to a simplistic heroes and villains coda, but redeemed by some gruesomely authentic battle sequences.

Features: Commentary by Mel Gibson and a lengthy featurette

The English Patient

Buena Vista/£19.99

Film: A doomed romance set against the backdrop of WWII, this harks back to the golden era of David Lean with its gorgeous imagery, complex characters and fateful story played against the unforgiving sands of the African desert. The tear-jerker it's okay to like.

Features: None

Gladiator

Columbia TriStar/£24.99

Film: Ridlet Scott's Oscar-winning epic is a triumphant return to the sword and sandals formula with Russell Crowe superb and muscular as Maximus, the General reduced to a slave, determined to have his revenge on the evil Emperor Commodus who murdered his family.

Features: *Making Of* documentary. Deleted scenes. Commentaries. Gladiator Games – Roman Blood Sport documentary. And given that it's on two discs, much more...

TEXT: LEE HART

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Ash's maxim: The band that showers together stays together.

PHOTO: SOPHIE HOWARTH

ASH

Youthful pop punkers get back on track with *GT3* and a new LP.

Breakdowns, breakups, number ones, teen adulation, the glory, the backlash, the 'drug hell'... Ash have already absorbed all the pop world has to throw at them, surfing disaster with a cool-headed charm. After the underwhelming sophomore effort *Nu-Clear Sounds*, they've regrouped and rallied with their best album yet, *Free All Angels*. Scarily, frontman Tim Wheeler is not yet 24.

"People think we're invincible," laughs Wheeler, "but our experiences proved that we're all very mortal. We learned a few lessons. Luckily our camaraderie kept us together and we're back to kick some ass."

Wheeler's nadir was his year of writer's block – "I was getting a Brian Wilson complex and I think I was bit young for all that, y'know" – and the subsequent drug binge he embarked upon in an effort to kick-start creativity. But that's old news and *Free All Angels* is a result of his most prolific songwriting period to date.

"This is the easy third album. We were a lot more confident in ourselves, there was no rush and the mood was rockin'. We recorded the album in a beautiful villa near Malaga in Spain after demoing the songs at home in Downpatrick, so it has a relaxed, get-your-priorities-right vibe. The liberated drinking laws certainly had an influence..."

"It was a lot better than rainy old Wales," adds bassist Mark Hamilton. "And cheaper. I don't know why no-one had told us about that before."

To finally realise Wheeler's New-Order-meets-The-Stooges-meets-Smokey-Robinson vision, it was time for the strings to come in. "I'd always had these string lines in my head but I didn't have anyone to help me score them. Then one day I bumped into a classical cello player in a café and he turned out to be a brilliant string arranger."

Of course, Ash are veterans of the *Gran Turismo* soundtracks and it's one of *Free All Angel*'s harder tunes, *Shark*, that's set to feature on *GT3*.

"For us it's a whole new way of getting the music out there and when you're playing the game, it beats the old Casio stuff," reasons Wheeler. "We've got quite a few songs that are good for raking along at 200 miles per hour."

"It's not like we were writing with the game in mind," says Hamilton, "Sony liked the faster, harsher stuff, so it wasn't difficult to make something like *Shark* which suits the driving mood."

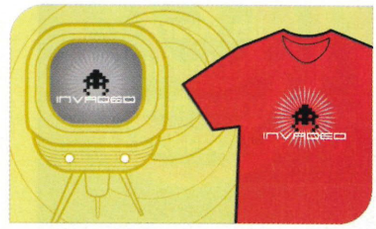
PaRappa The Rapper and *Driver* may be the current tourbus favourites, but what would the Ash game look like? "A science fiction deathmatch between all four members," decides the positive Wheeler. "Or maybe one where we go round massacring boybands." And with that, the newly rejuvenated *Ash* are off to set light to some more *Westlife* CDs. Burn baby burn. ☐ **SR**

//"This is our easy third album... We're back to kick some ass." Ash's Tim Wheeler//

Free All Angels

Ash's third album proper is their best yet, re-asserting their claim to the dumb melodic rock crown before lobbing glorious curveballs like the Walker Brothers-sampling *Candy* into the fray. What's more, the CD-ROM contains an ingenious interactive video mixer feature, masterminded by the band's new media guru Mark Hamilton. "There'll be about 200 video clips that you can pull on to the mixer and mess around with and you can post your completed efforts on the Web site. We've got a pretty hectic and crazy message board on there. We wanted to give the fans something where they could get creative themselves." It was also at Hamilton's instigation that Ash scrapped the cassette format of their *Burn Baby Burn* single in order to release it on DVD and include their *Easy Rider*-style 'Road Trip' documentary.

**Free All Angels* is out now on Infectious. Check out Mark's handiwork at www.ash-official.com



JOYSTICK JUNKIES

www.joystickjunkies.com

Recently launched, this is a game site many of us have been longing for. It's a retro page designed around having, to put it plainly, a bloody good time. The idea behind the site has been to reach far back into our dark gaming history and pull all the old classics together, place them in arcade cabinets in top clubs around the country and then frug the nights away with a combination of the smoothest tracks and coldest beer. Sign up for free membership and you get the chance to win oodles of prizes and get the latest info about where and when the JJ venues are happening. The site is also a shop for some truly inspired clothing ranged from Crackman T-shirts to the funkiest *Space Invader* shirts we've seen. Retro gaming is getting a facelift and JJ is the site that's going to do it. **BL**

AMMO CITY

www.ammocity.com

Ever wanted to be so cutting edge, so up-to date that people would bow to you just by entering a room? Well, what better medium to keep up to date with news, latest fashions, music, lifestyle accessories and 'must have' gadgets than the most cutting edge lifestyle site on the net? Ammo City, although a new kid on the cyber block is like having a constantly up-dated copy of *Mixmag*, *FHM* and *Sleaze Nation* all rolled into one. Stunningly designed with bizarre CCTV inspired visuals, Ammocity is as urban and 'on da street' as you could hope for without the hassle of getting mugged. An essential site for anyone remotely in touch with the world. Or who wants to be... **BL**

THE TOP FIVE

Forget polygon-dripping gaming powerhouses, retro is where it's really at...

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Huge database of games and systems. Superb.
2. **www.miniarcade.com**
All things handheld and pixellated.
3. **www.klov.com**
Billed as a 'Killer List of Videogames'. Accurate.
4. **www.geocities.com/arcadeclassics.geo/**
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5. **www.retrobase.com**
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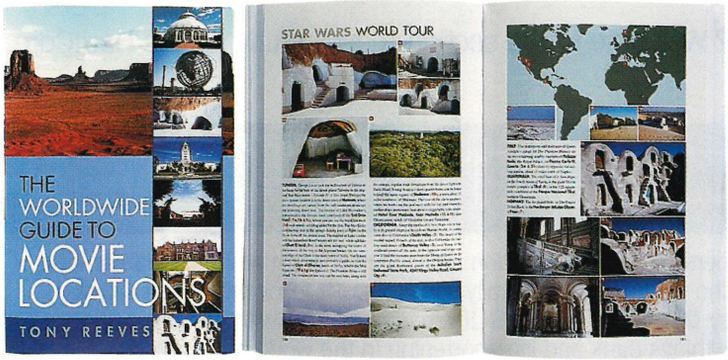


THE WORLDWIDE GUIDE TO MOVIE LOCATIONS

Author: Tony Reeves/**Publisher:** Titan Books/**Price:** £16.99

It's always pleasing to see someone's personal obsession transformed into a way to make a living. In Tony's case it was an obsession with the real-life locations of famous film scenes that got him going, and he's gone a long way since discovering he was living just round the corner from where John Landis was shooting *An American Werewolf In London* (Jenny Agutter's flat is actually 64 Coleherne Road, SW10).

This comprehensive book covers 1500 movies in a directory style slightly reminiscent of a Caravan Club handbook's guide to camping spots. Each location comes complete with directions and thumbnail photograph, including essential details about where the film's iconic scenes were shot and occasional insightful anecdotes, although they're not rated for toilet facilities.

Apparently the Queen Elizabeth Suite of the Crown Hotel in Amersham – where Andie McDowell and Hugh Grant share a moment of passion in *Four Weddings And A Funeral* – is booked up for years ahead. Reeves' book is certainly a must for any vicarious thrillseekers of that ilk, and also doubles as a handy reference work for anyone who's a bit nutty about films. Did you know that the moment in *Jaws* when the old fisherman's shark-mauled head drops out of the bottom of the boat was filmed in the swimming pool of the movie's editor, Verna Field? Thought not. ☐ **SF**

Mags we like

MEAN

Frequency: Bi-monthly/**Price:** $4.99
See: www.meanmag.com

Probably America's coolest mag, *Mean* has been coming straight out of LA since 1999. Focusing largely on film and music, past cover stars have included Andy Kaufman, Beth Orton, Peter Sellers, John Waters and Chris Rock. This featured issue boasts glam-rappers Outkast on the cover, brilliantly interviewed by Beck on why wearing pink is so damn fly.

Inside is a hefty feature on classic metal including interviews with Lemmy, Angus Young and Spinal Tap as well as a cool section on Christian Rock. The Anglophile outlook of Mean's writers make the magazine an easy read for us Limeys. It's also not bogged down by the sometimes oppressive point-scoring of UK style mags like *The Face* and *Dazed*, as *Mean*'s healthy smattering of retro features proves. Design is perfunctory and the relentless Q&A style of all the interviews is a little tiresome, but otherwise *Mean* is about the best thing made of paper to come out of the US. ☐ **SR**

Gaming content: Just a page of informed reviews in this issue, but past editions have included retro gaming features.

**We bought our copy of* Mean *in the States but you should be able to get it at Borders in London (0207 292 1600). Failing that, write to* Mean *at 2619 Hyperion Avenue Suite B, Los Angeles, CA 90027, USA*

TEXT: SAM RICHARDS

Glum and glummer: Air's new album is a moody masterpiece.

SLEEVENOTES

Using the power of your PS2 with this month's best CDs.

AIR 10,000 Hz Legend (Source)

Who? A darker Air descends for its second proper album, more *Virgin Suicides* soundtrack than *Moon Safari*. Yes, the feted French duo have gone goth. Kind of.

Highlights: On the wonderfully world-weary *Electronic Performers*, vocodered vocals have never sounded more mournful. The Beck track is boss, too.

Lowlights: There's nothing like *Sexy Boy* on offer making *10,000 Hz Legend* a difficult – but rewarding – experience.

Verdict: Air have righteously rejected their status as dinner party perennials; this is mood music with an acerbic twist. **8/10**

BRAN VAN 3000 Discosis (Grand Royal)

Who? Eclectic Canadian collective best known for wastrel's anthem *Drinking In LA*. Curtis Mayfield collaborates on *Discosis* from beyond the grave.

Highlights: Bran Van are at their best when they stick to simple tunesmithery as on *Predictable* and the dreamy *Love Cliché*.

Lowlights: By lobbing in the kitchen sink alongside stupid hip-hop skits and Youssou N'Dour, Bran Van only dilute their talents. A blatant case of too many kooks.

Verdict: The Mayfield-fuelled single *Astounded* will deservedly be all over the radio, but you'd have to be a multiple schizophrenic to truly love *Discosis*. **6/10**

THE AVALANCHES Since I Left You (XL)

Who? Ambitious Aussie upstarts making like Coldcut on crack and pasting together esoteric sound snippets into a sunlit sample symphony.

Highlights: From the moment the gorgeous title track segues woozily into Madonna's *Holiday*, it's obvious *Since I Left You* is a pill best swallowed whole.

Lowlights: Boney M's *Ma Baker* is arguably a sample too far, but otherwise The Avalanches' debut is almost infallible.

Verdict: The Beach Boys go disco as produced by Prince Paul and Mercury Rev. *Since I Left You* is a bold, beatific experience. Album of the year so far. **9/10**

ORBITAL The Altogether (Ffrr)

Who? Sixth album from original techno baldies finds the brothers Hartnoll traipsing in ever decreasing circles.

Highlights: As they've abandoned anthemic epics entirely, it's difficult to pick standouts, but David Gray does himself a favour on the impressive *Illuminate*.

Lowlights: Put it down to an experimental itch, but the punk-driven dirges of *Tension* and *Tootled* are unlistenable.

Verdict: Dominated by acid house, early synth-pop and new wave samples, *The Altogether* is Orbital's '80s opus. Sounds like they're laughing at our expense. **5/10**

ZERO 7 Simple Things (Ultimate Dilemma)

Who? If you're alienated by Air's darker new direction, Zero 7 take the *Premieres Symptomes* template and add even more swooning strings over the top.

Highlights: The full-on Love Unlimited Orchestra groove-down of *Give It Away* and the Barryesque Bondage of *Out Of Town*. Mmmm, nice.

Lowlights: Tracks featuring female vocalist Sia tempt Morcheeba comparisons. Thankfully, Zero 7 retain a tight vice-like grip on the funk.

Verdict: So rich and seductive, on hearing *Simple Things* it's difficult not to imagine doing the Barry White all night long. Even by yourself. **8/10**

» ALSO RELEASED

Four Tet Pause (Domino)/**Transglobal Underground** Yes Boss Food Corner (Ark 21)/**Ugly Duckling** Journey To Anywhere (XL)/**Papa M** Papa M Sings (Rock Action)/**Nash** The Chancer (Go Beat)/**Destiny's Child** Survivor (Columbia)

HARDCORE

Tips, tactics, tricks, cheats. Want to rip your new games to shreds? Welcome to the section that's strictly for the HardCore...

Hello. You are through to the voicemail of HardCore. I'm afraid I'm currently out of the office, and I'll be on the run from the authorities until I'm captured, heavily sedated and returned to the HardCore nerve centre/mop room. Or next Tuesday, whichever comes first. If you want great cheats for *NBA Hoopz*, and tips for *Star Wars: Starfighter* please turn to page 137. If you would like to luxuriate in our fabulous *Quake III: Revolution* guide giving you the inside edge on Bullfrog's tremendous first-person shooter, then please stay on this page. If you'd like to leave a message, then please get a grip, this is a page of text. Beeeeeep...

Paul Fitzpatrick
Staff Writer

HELP ME!

If you've got any special requests for tips, hints, codes or advice (providing it exists) I'm your dutiful manservant. In fact it's just lovely to know there are people out there who know my name. One day I might be able to join the happy people like you. For now I'm content to just lend my services to make your gaming life that bit more enjoyable: Write to me at: **Hardcore, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.** Electrical cyberpost to **PS2@futurenet.co.uk**.

QUAKE III REVOLUTION

Sneaking up on everyone like a mute ninja in slippers *Quake III Revolution* unleashes enough arena based carnage to keep even the most unhinged, frag-hungry psycho busy for quite literally yonks. *Quake* followers will be satiated and challenged whilst novices will wonder why they didn't pick up a BFG-10K earlier. And so, with you *and* you in mind we proudly present our exclusive guide to all things dank and life-shortening in the world of *Quake III*.

BEGINNER'S HINTS

1. Keep moving you will be harder to hit this way.

2. Experiment with the controller configuration options until you find the settings that suit you best. As you improve increase the control sensitivity.

3. Pick up health, armour and other items whenever it's possible.

4. Play hard and jump into the action. It might be easier to stand away from a fight and snipe your opponents, but if you have health you should jump right in.

5. Don't be afraid to run away from an opponent if you have low health or are wielding a poor weapon.

6. When playing in Campaign mode always aim to meet some of the Reward Requirements for each arena. These will give you extra items to use during your first life of the next arena you reach.

7. Target opponents just after they re-spawn as they are generally less dangerous. They could have a weapon but probably won't have picked up a powerful one.

8. For an extra challenge, turn off the auto aim. You've only got your life to lose, after all.

CHARACTER HINTS

Choose your campaign character according to how you play as each has their own unique strengths and weaknesses. Below each description are the capacities for their Health and Armour. Some general suggestions on character selection are:

1. If you die too soon after the arena starts you should choose characters that start off with the most health – like Daemia or Anarki.

2. If you sense you aren't damaging your opponents effectively try the hard hitters Klesk or Sarge.

3. If you keep running into walls try the slower Doom. If not try the faster Anarki and Klesk.

Sarge and Daemia
Sarge and Daemia are good all-round players. Sarge has a little more fire-power, particularly with the splash damage weapons but Daemia has more health and survives a little better in the environment.

SARGE	Default	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
Health	105	110	115	120	125
Armour	100	105	110	115	120

DAEMIA	Default	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
Health	115	120	125	130	135
Armour	95	100	105	110	115

Doom
Doom is a walking tank. He can pick up the most armour, carry the most ammo and it takes a lot of lava to hurt him. This durability has its price as he also has the slowest top speed. He is particularly well suited for close combat.

DOOM	Default	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
Health	95	100	105	110	115
Armour	115	120	125	130	135

Anarki
Anarki, on the other hand, is all about speed. He shoots fastest, runs fastest, jumps highest and because of his hoverboard he survives big falls and the lava melts his board before it hurts him. Anarki is for the hit and run player.

ANARKI	Default	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
Health	110	115	120	125	130
Armour	100	105	110	115	120

Klesk
True to his form, Klesk has a hard armour shell but soft insides. Klesk has the potential to inflict the most damage per shot. This combination and his strong fire-power makes him good for mid to long-distance combat. Fortunately, if he does get too close to the action and he's running low on his armour, he's a swift runner.

KLESK	Default	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
Health	90	95	100	105	110
Armour	105	110	115	120	125

THE WEAPONS

There are 12 different weapons in the game and all are deadly in the right situations. Knowing when to use each weapon is almost as important as actually using it. Make sure you know what type of weapons each arena contains and where they are. Whenever you re-spawn always pick up your preferred weapons before you go and look for a fight.

The auto aim feature in the game makes rapid firing weapons even more accurate. If you are having problems hitting targets then make sure auto aim is switched on and use weapons like the Plasma and Chain Gun.

Gauntlet
To hurt anyone with this weapon you are going to have to reach out and touch them with it. Despite the risks involved with this it is still effective when used in a confined area against a weakened enemy. If an enemy attacks you using it then carefully back away from them and keep firing.

Machine Gun
This is your default weapon in the majority of the arenas. The weapon can be very effective if you have auto aim switched on. Always pick up other weapons as a priority when you spawn, the Machine Gun is best used as a backup weapon when your others run out of ammo.

Shotgun
A devastating weapon if you are close to an opponent. Don't try and use it at long range as it does little damage. It also doesn't fire very rapidly so aim your shots carefully.

Grenade Launcher
This can be the most difficult weapon to use because of the way the grenades bounce around unpredictably but they are very useful at indiscriminate spamming. Try looking down slightly before firing the weapon and the grenades will often slide across the floor, this makes them very difficult for your enemies to see and avoid. This is also a good weapon if it is fired into a group of enemies in a confined space. Use this to bounce around corners to hit opponents you can't see. Keep track of where the grenades have landed as they can hurt you when they explode.

Rocket Launcher
This always fires in straight lines making a moving target hard to hit. Try to pre-empt where your enemy is moving to and fire to that place. This weapon is also very effective if fired into the ground near a target – the splash damage from the explosion will hurt them. This weapon can also be used to Rocket Jump with. To do this, look straight down and fire into the ground just after pressing the jump button. You will lose health and armour but you will be propelled far into the air. This technique takes time to perfect but can be used to access hidden parts of an arena. It is also a good way to escape from or confuse enemies with.

Rail Gun
This is a very powerful weapon but it doesn't fire very often. Aim your shots very carefully with this weapon and keep your targets at a distance. If you are in a space based platform arena then this weapon is excellent when auto aim is switched on.

Lightning Gun
This fires a constant stream of electrical energy at your enemies. This is best used at medium- to long-range. When using it keep the fire button held down and adjust your aim so that the stream remains on the enemy.

Plasma Gun
This is a rapid firing weapon that is best used at a distance and has a very wide field of splash damage. If your opponent is in a narrow corridor they won't be able to avoid the fire from it, especially if auto aim is turned on

BFG-10K
A very powerful rapid firing weapon. Great in all situations and should be used whenever possible. There isn't usually much ammo available for it so don't waste your shots

Nail Gun
A similar weapon to the Shotgun but the nails it fires spread out a lot more, this makes the weapon more effective at medium distances. A slow reload speed makes this particularly difficult to use for long-range fragging.

Chain Gun
This is the fastest firing weapon in the game but it quickly runs out of ammo. This gun is very effective at short and medium distances when auto aim is on

Proximity Mine Launcher
This is a tactical weapon so don't fire it directly at enemies unless you have no other weapons. Place the mines on areas where enemies are likely to visit. Mines you place can also hurt you so try to remember where you have put them. Placing mines near weapon or item spawn points is a great tactic. If you are feeling very nasty then try placing some mines near to combatant spawn points or on your own flag base, they won't know what hit them. The mines only explode when your enemy or non-team-mate comes near them or when their timer runs out.

MAJOR CAMPAIGN ARENA LEVEL HINTS

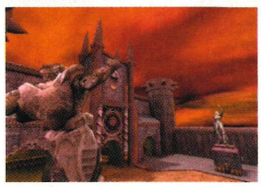
Quake III isn't just about annihilating anything that moves – there's tactics too.

TUTORIAL

Frags: 3
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Crash

■ The first room is free from danger so pick up everything in it before going through the doors to fight Crash. Keep moving from one end of the arena to the other as quickly as possible, this will help you find and kill Crash soon after she has re-spawned.

TIER ONE



ARENA GATE
Frags: 5
Time: 10 mins
Opponents: Ranger

■ There is only one opponent but this arena is more complex than the tutorial. There is plenty of armour so collect it whenever possible. Keep moving around the arena and you might be lucky and catch Ranger soon after he re-spawns. This will make killing him easier. From the courtyard aim your rocket towards the floor near the health icon under the walkway. If you've a quick finger, you may be able to pick off Ranger when he walks past.

PLACE OF MANY DEATHS
Frags: N/A
Time: 10 mins
Opponents: Krusade, Bitterman, Grunt
Possession Time: 60 Seconds

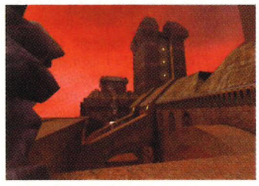
■ This is a possession game where the aim is to hold the flag for as long as possible. As soon as the game starts run backwards to collect the armour. Then run forwards towards the flag room. If an opponent collects it before you reach it then concentrate your fire on them. Once you have the flag avoid fighting and keep running around the perimeter of the arena to collect health. You can also go up the stairs and collect the Mega Health. Stay in this area and you will be able to see any opponents coming at you. Look out for the aggressive tendencies of Grunt here.

HOUSE OF PAIN
Frags: 10
Time: 10 mins
Opponents: Phobos, Hunter

■ Keep moving as the time limit is against you in this arena. Collect the Haste power-up whenever you can. The easiest way to get the Double Damage power-up behind the gate is to wait near it until your opponents activate the switch outside. If you want to activate the switch yourself then you need to be using Haste as the gate closes very quickly. Staying near the Haste and Double Damage items spawn point gives you the best opportunity for kills. Get the Plasma Gun as quickly as possible.

POWER STATION 0218
Frags: 10
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Grunt

■ There is only one opponent but they could attack you from any direction. You need to make sure that your opponent doesn't get the Quad Damage as this makes him most difficult. Use the Rocket Launcher when attacking the enemy in a corrido – even if you miss the splash damage will hurt them. This is a flat arena so turn off auto centring and aim the rocket to the floor beneath your opponent.



HEROES' ODYSSEY
Frags: 3 kills each opponent
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Hunter, Bitterman, Phobos
Player Lives: 10

■ Use stage one to build up your armour whilst fighting Hunter. Get the invulnerability item from the archway at the edge of the arena in stage two. Get the Quad Damage when Bitterman is on his last life.

TIER TWO

ARENA OF DEATH
Frags: 15
Time: 10 mins
Opponents: Hunter, Orbb

■ Try to use the Chain Gun whenever possible and keep picking up the ammo for it. This weapon is excellent at killing your opponents at a distance, regardless of how good your aim is. Orbb is a little shorter so you may have to aim down more to get him but otherwise he's an easy kill compared to Hunter.

HELL'S GATE
Frags: 20
Time: 10 mins
Opponents: Grunt, Wrack

■ This arena introduces you to the danger of red fog. The fog kills if you touch it or drop into it. If you find that you fall off the sloping walkways then avoid using them and stay around the areas at each end of the arena. Although powerful, the Rail Gun may not be the best weapon to use in this arena if your accuracy isn't good. Otherwise it should make for some easy pickings. Watch out for Grunt when he's got the Rail Gun.

TEMPLE OF RETRIBUTION
Frags: 15
Time: 10 mins
Opponents: Hossman, Wrack, Slash, Orbb

■ Most of the fighting takes place in the area near the Rocket Launcher and the exit to the secret area. Build up your character's health, armour and fire-power – especially the Rocket Launcher – before going to this area to get some multiple kills very quickly. Using Quad Damage makes this easier. A switch in the enclosed area above the stairs, near the personal teleporter pick-up opens grating on the floor that will take you to the secret area.

BRIMSTONE ABBEY
Frags: N/A
Time: 10 mins
Opponents: Gorre, Slash, Hossman
Capture Limit: 5

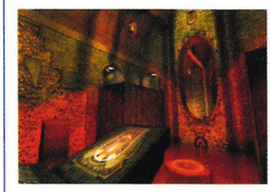
■ This is a one flag capture the flag arena. The neutral flag is on a platform in the central room, use the angled jump pad to get to it. Your base flag is on the top floor, above the winding staircase. Your opponents won't try to capture the flag on this arena so only pick it up when you are confident you have enough health and armour to hold on to it. Once you pick up the neutral flag go left out of the room, this route takes you past the Mega Health and towards the flag capture point at the top of the stairs. Don't fight your opponents unless they are blocking your path. If you die the flag will stay where you left it.

THE FORGOTTEN PLACE
Frags: 3 for each opponent
Time: 10 mins
Opponents: Hunter, Orbb, Wrack, Hossman, Slash, Gorre
Player Lives: 10

■ The key to besting this arena is using the power-ups that are in the secret passage. Look for a section of wall in the corridor area that looks damaged – fire at it to open the secret area. You can pick up armour, Mega Health and the Kamikaze power-up from this secret area. Use the Kamikaze if you are low on health in areas when there are a lot of opponents, the enemy often fights near the Plasma Gun spawn point. The Kamikaze blast will kill you but also reduce the lives of your opponents. Orbb and Hossman should be the easiest kills.

If you have the Kamikaze but die without using it then it will explode a few seconds later. Make sure you avoid going near your dead body in these situations! If anyone makes your body explode after killing you then the Kamikaze will not activate.

TIER THREE

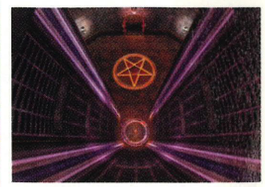


HEROES' KEEP
Frags: N/A
Time: 10 mins
Opponents: Keel, Gorre, Razor, Stripe
Possession Time: 90 seconds

■ When you have the flag you will have to constantly fight to keep it – there aren't any safe places in this arena. If you haven't got the flag then watch out for it re-spawning after an opponent falls into the red fog – you can often pick it up before your opponents realise what is going on.

FATAL INSTINCT
Frags: 10
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Angel, Stripe

■ The small size of this arena means that your tactics are limited. Use the Quad Damage as often as possible and stay in the outer corridors of the arena so that your opponents can't sneak up on you through the fog.



CAMPING GROUNDS
Frags: 15
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Bitterman, Angel, Razor, Stripe

■ There is always a lot of action on the ground floor. Pick up as much health and armour as you can before going to this part of the arena. Like its name says though, the rims surrounding the lower areas are prime places to camp and pick off opponents. Razor is the one with the biggest attitude.

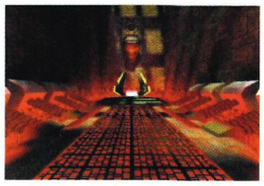
QUAKE III REVOLUTION continued

DEMONS KEEP
Frags: N/A
Time: 10 mins
Opponents: Razor, Keel, Stripe
Capture Limit: 5
■ This is a one flag capture the flag arena. Your opponents won't try to capture the flag on this arena but they will try to guard it. Only pick the flag up when you are confident you have enough health and armour to hold on to it. The neutral flag is at the very bottom of the arena and is surrounded by swinging axes. The flag is usually guarded by enemies so have a good weapon ready to use when you get there. As soon as you get the flag use the jump pad inside the cylinder and work your way back up through the arena, via the Mega Health pick up. Find your way outside and jump onto all the jump pads to reach the flag capture drop-off point. Razor again is the one to look out for.

VERTICAL VENGEANCE
Frags: 2 lives each opponent
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Bitterman, Gorre, Razor, Stripe, Angel
Number of Lives: 10
■ It also helps to stay outside as much as possible to prevent being attacked from above. This is because the arena requires a lot of looking up and down to survive. You may want to adjust your controller sensitivities when you enter this. Gorre and Stripe will be the tough ones to beat. Angel is the last to spawn but will most likely be the toughest to defeat.

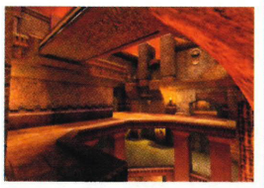
TIER FOUR

THE NAMELESS PLACE
Frags: 15
Time: 20 mins
Opponents: Lucy, Biker, Patriot, Tankjr, Keel
■ A deathmatch game against five opponents. The chamber of blue light will give you more health and armour for as long as you remain in it. This makes it a good place to fight from but the light may obstruct your view. Before trying to hold this part of the arena it is best to collect lots of ammo so that you can stay there for a long time.

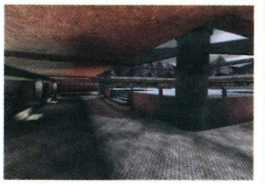


THE PROVING GROUNDS
Frags: 25
Time: 10 mins
Opponents: Patriot, Visor
■ The bottom section of this arena is a good place to get kills from as the narrow corridors make it easier to hit targets that are unable to dodge your fire.

THE HOUSE OF DECAY
Frags: 25
Time: 10 mins
Opponents: Visor, Biker, Tankjr
■ Use the Rocket Launcher against opponents on the staircases to get multiple kills quickly.



LOST WORLD
Frags: 15
Time: 20 mins
Opponents: Lucy, Patriot, Tank, Keel
■ Most of the action takes place in the narrow corridors on the middle section of the arena. Get the Mega Health and Medi-kit items and you will live longer. Use the Rocket Launcher and Quad Damage to score a number of easy kills when opponents are in the corridors.



ARENAS OF PAIN
Frags: 3 lives per opponent, 1 for the mighty Vadrigar
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Biker, Lucy, Patriot, Vadrigar
Player Lives: 10
■ This arena is split into three sections. The first two sections should be easy enough if you stick with the tactics that have got you this far in the game. The third section sees you facing the Vadrigar Arena Master for the first time. This opponent has a lot of health (250) and very good accuracy. To beat him you will need to collect as much health, ammo and armour before trying to engage him. Keep moving around the outer section of the arena and keep your distance from him at all times. Weapons like the Chain Gun and Plasma Gun work well against him if you have auto aim turned on.

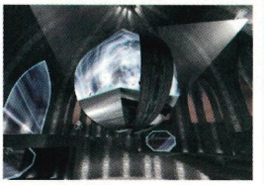
TIER FIVE

THE LONGEST YARD
Frags: 15
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Major, Sorlag, Zael
■ This arena takes place on platforms suspended in space. If you fall off a platform you won't die but it should still be avoided at all costs. To get some easy kills try jumping to the distant platform with the Rail Gun on it, zoom in with this weapon and start sniping. Watch out for opponents jumping to the platform when you are there though. Sorlag is the tough one here.

VORTEX PORTAL
Frags: N/A
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Bones, Major, Visor, Id, Zael
Capture Limit: 10
■ Like the other one flag capture the flag arenas your opponents won't try to capture the flag themselves. But here they won't try to guard it too much as they'll be prowling the large spaces. Keep moving at all times, only engage the enemy when they block your path. When you are in your own base spend some time picking up all the items you can. Memorise the route to retrieve the flag, build up a rhythm and don't stop for anyone.

SPACE CHAMBER
Frags: N/A
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Sorlag, Cadavre, Bones, Visor
Possession Time: 120 seconds
■ This is a possession game and falling into the black void will result in death and the loss of the flag. The flag spawns at one end at the top of the arena. Go here as soon as the arena starts and you might be able to get the flag before anyone else does. If an opponent gets the flag then try looking around the bottom of the arena for them. Keep an eye on the messages in the top left of the screen – an opponent falling off the arena will cause the flag to re-spawn. Once you have the flag stay around the top of the arena, the bots do not visit this area very much. Avoid the Double Haste item as this can cause you to fall off the arena too easily. Once you have the flag, stick to the edges of the arena and keep moving.

EVIL PLAYGROUND
Frags: 10
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Xaero
■ This is a one-on-one battle against Xaero. Your opponent likes to use the Rail Gun so prevent him from getting it if you can. If he does attack you with it then use the strafe controls to avoid him. You can be successful by staying near the yellow armour and Plasma Gun area, Xaero will often come down the corridors near this area and you can kill him quite easily as he won't be able to dodge your fire.



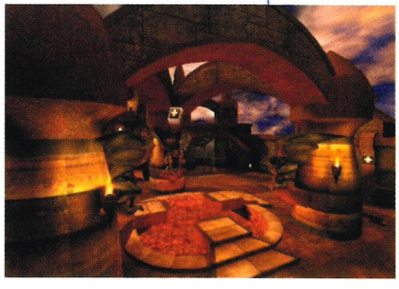
FINAL RESTING PLACE
Frags: Hopefully just one...
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Vadrigar
Player Lives: 5
■ This is a battle against the Vadrigar Arena Master. As soon as the game begins, move into cover to prevent being hit. Before you can fight the Vadrigar you need to destroy the three shield generators that are creating the force field around him. Stand underneath the central sphere when destroying the generators and you won't be hurt. Before you destroy the final generator spend some time collecting all the health, armour and power-ups you can find. As soon as you destroy the final generator the Vadrigar will drop down and begin attacking you, make sure you move into the outer section of the arena as soon as the generator is destroyed. Keep the Vadrigar at a distance and use the safety of the outer section of the arena if you need to build up your health, armour or ammo.

When the Vadrigar nears 100 health points he will return to the central sphere. This gives you the opportunity to collect more items before killing him from a distance.

BONUS TIER

THE KEEPER
Frags: 20
Time: 15 mins
Opponents: Mistress, Reaper
■ This is a straightforward fight against two opponents. By now your character will be fully maxed out in all their stats and you shouldn't have any problems defeating these two opponents in the time limit. If you do have a problem, focus in on the Mistress as she's an easier match in a duel.

Once you reach 'The Keeper' the Reaper and Mistress characters are unlocked and the player can use them as his own characters in multiplayer.



MULTIPLAYER GAME MODES

There are eight different game modes in multiplayer.

Deathmatch
Its all against all so fire at anything that moves. Learn where your opponents like to go and be there with a big gun waiting for them.

Team Deathmatch
Stay close to a team-mate whenever possible but never fire directly at them, even with the Friendly Fire option set to NO – it's just a waste of ammo.

Single Weapon Deathmatch
This mode is a great way to practise your skills with all the different weapons. Running out of ammo can be a problem in these arenas so keep collecting the weapons that dead enemies often leave behind.

Single Weapon Team Deathmatch
Support your team at all times. Try to remember that your team-mates also need ammo so let them pick some up if you feel they might need it.

One Flag Capture The Flag
You need to collect the neutral flag and take it to the enemies coloured flag. There are two broad tactics you can use. Try and score using the neutral flag, or, defend your own flag to stop the enemy scoring. When defending your flag, make sure you have plenty of ammo so that you can stay in that one location for a long period of time. This is different than the Campaign mode in that the Campaign mode you have to take it back to your base.

Capture The Flag
Grab the enemies' coloured flag and return it to your own coloured flag to score. Problem is that you can't score if the enemy has your flag. Be aware of what your team-mates are doing, if everyone is defending the base then its up to you to go for the flag. If no one is at your base then you should stay there to protect it.
If you and the enemy both have each others flags then it's risky to try and get your own flag back single-handed – if you get killed then the enemy will be able to return their flag to its base instantly. Instead, follow your team-mates when you are trying to retrieve your flag, there is more chance that the enemy won't get it back if they kill you and you drop it.

Possession
You need to collect and hold onto the neutral flag for a set time limit. When you have the flag try to avoid any fighting and concentrate on moving to areas of the arena that your opponents rarely visit.

Team Possession
You need to collect and hold onto the neutral flag for a set time limit. If a team-mate has the flag then stay close to them – if they are killed you will be able to quickly pick up the loose flag yourself.

NBA HOOPZ

Codes

You want codes? You want codes? You can't handle the codes! Or then again, maybe you can. Simply wait for the 'Vs Screen' that appears just before a match starts, enter the sequence of your choice and reap the (frequently bizarre) benefits.

Infinite Turbo
R2x3, ⊗x1, L2x2, ↑

No Goal Tending
R2x4, ⊗x4, L2x4, ←

Tiny Heads
R2x3, ⊗x3, ←

No Fouls (teams must agree)
R2x2, ⊗x2, L2x2, →

Tiny Players
R2x5, ⊗x4, L2x3, ←

Granny Shots
R2x1, ⊗x2, L2x1, ←

Beach Court
⊗x2, L2x3, ←

Street Court
R2x3, ⊗x2, ←

No Hotspots (teams must agree)
R2x3, L2x1, ↑

Show Percentage Chance of Shot Success
⊗x1, L2x1, ↓

Show Hotspot
R2x1, ⊗x1, ↓

Big Heads
R2x3, →

ABA Ball
R2x1, ⊗x1, L2x1, →

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER

***Star Wars: Starfighter* spoilers here!**

Not content with producing a StarPlayer game, the maker of *Star Wars: Starfighter* has stuffed the nooks and crannies of the shiny disc with all sorts of unlockable extras. And we've got our hands on them, just for you. Want to submit to the Dark Side of the Force and unlock the whole game? Well you can. Want to see Trade Federation Battle Droid in a chef's hat, flipping burgers on a barbecue in deep space? Uhuh. That too. And what's more, we've got the lowdown on what you need to do if you'd prefer to get tooled up through sheer effort. Yoda would be proud, young padawan. But first off, here are a few general pointers for prolonged life when you're chest high in Merc Dianogas.

GENERAL TIPS

1. Use your wingmen. Of course some missions don't give you the option, but when they do, comrades can be very useful. This is particularly so when you need to attack a heavily shielded and defended craft. Order the wingmen to cover you and free yourself up to concentrate on weakening your objective. Best of all, they can't refuse. Best make use of them then.

2. Get stuck in early. Use your Zoom view (L1) whenever possible to disrupt/snipe enemy ships at a distance before they get a chance to nobble you at close quarters.

3. Learn to roll with it. As soon as you can banish any thoughts of a world with the sky at the top and the ground at the bottom (even when they are where they should be). As long as you hit your targets it doesn't matter which way your ship is up. And remember, if you do get in an inverted pickle the right analogue stick will right your craft instantly.

4. In the space missions it's a lot easier to track and nail targets on the vertical axis, rather than pursuing them from right to left or vice-versa.

5. Make strategic use of the boost and brake. When dogfights get too tangled it can be worth accelerating away at speed, releasing boost, rolling 90 degrees and pulling up. You'll perform the space equivalent of a powerslide and find your target(s) in front of you and very vulnerable.

6. In close combat don't feel you have to highlight a target to attack it. If it's in your sights profit from the moment and take a pop.

CODES

To activate the codes select Options from the main menu and the Codes from the sub-menu.

Master code: Enter 'OVERSEER' as a code to unlock everything except the multiplayer levels.

Invincibility: Enter 'MINIME'.

Unlock experimental Naboo fighter for bonus missions: Enter 'BLUENSF'. You will only be able to fly the ship if you've used the 'OVERSEER' code already. Alternatively, you can fly the ship if you earn a gold medal in the Naboo Proving Grounds, The Royal Escort, Taking The Offensive, Midnight Munitions Run, Rescue On Solleu, and The Final Assault missions.

Unlock the two multiplayer levels: Enter 'ANDREW'. This allows you to play two 'split-screen' games. Canyon Race is self explanatory. Capture the Flag is an airborne twist on the mulitplayer fave.

Disable cockpit HUD: Enter 'NOHUD'.

Enemy ship gallery: Enter 'SHIPS'.

Gallery of game cast and their ships: Enter 'HEROES'.

Pre-production art of mission environments: Enter 'PLANETS'.

Reversed controls: Enter 'JARJAR'. The message 'Jar Jar mode' will appear to confirm correct code entry. This gives your starfighter an authentically Jar Jar feel by rendering it pathologically irritating.

View development team: Enter 'TEAM'.

Picture of Simon Day from LucasArts: Enter 'SIMON'. Why? Because he's there.

James Zhang's comic strip: Enter 'JAMEZ'. This is a lovingly drawn depiction of a typical day at work for *Starfighter* concept artist, James Zhang. See issue #01 for more of James' work.

View credits: Enter 'CREDITS'.

Alternate camera angles: Enter 'DIRECTOR'. The words 'Director mode' will appear to confirm you've entered it correctly. Now you can cycle through the full range of camera angles in any mission you like. Press SELECT to cycle camera views or L1 to zoom in. N.B. This does make playing the mission impossible so do make sure you've saved your progress in advance. To reverse the code merely return to the Options menu and reactivate the game's default settings.

Christmas FMV sequence: Enter 'WOZ' as a code. Quite, quite mad.

***Dr Strangelove* bonus:** While approaching the second missile frigate in the Charms Way bonus mission you will see two escape pods being launched from it. One of them, when highlighted, will be identified as the 'ChrisCorrpedo' (after *Starfighter*'s Lead Programmer, Chris Corry who appeared on last issue's demo DVD *SF* interview). Fly close enough and you will see a Battle Droid riding the escape pod, waving a cowboy hat in the air, just like Slim Pickins in the closing moments of Kubrick's Cold War masterpiece.

Hidden Message: Enter 'LTDJGD' to activate a sneakily placed message from one of the programmers to his two sons.

Barbecue Droid bonus: To view this little gem you need to enter the DIRECTOR mode (see above) and then start up the Fighter Training bonus mission. Then sit back and wait. for the fun to begin.

HOW TO UNLOCK INDIVIDUAL SHIPS AND MISSIONS.

Charm's Way mission: Earn a bronze medal in The Royal Escort, Contract Infraction, Piracy Above Lok, Taking The Offensive, The New Resistance, and The Final Assault missions.

Outpost Attack mission: Earn a bronze medal in all of the 14 default missions.

Canyon Sprint mission: Earn silver in the Naboo Proving Grounds, The Royal Escort, Taking The Offensive, Midnight Munitions Run, Rescue On The Solleu, and The Final Assault.

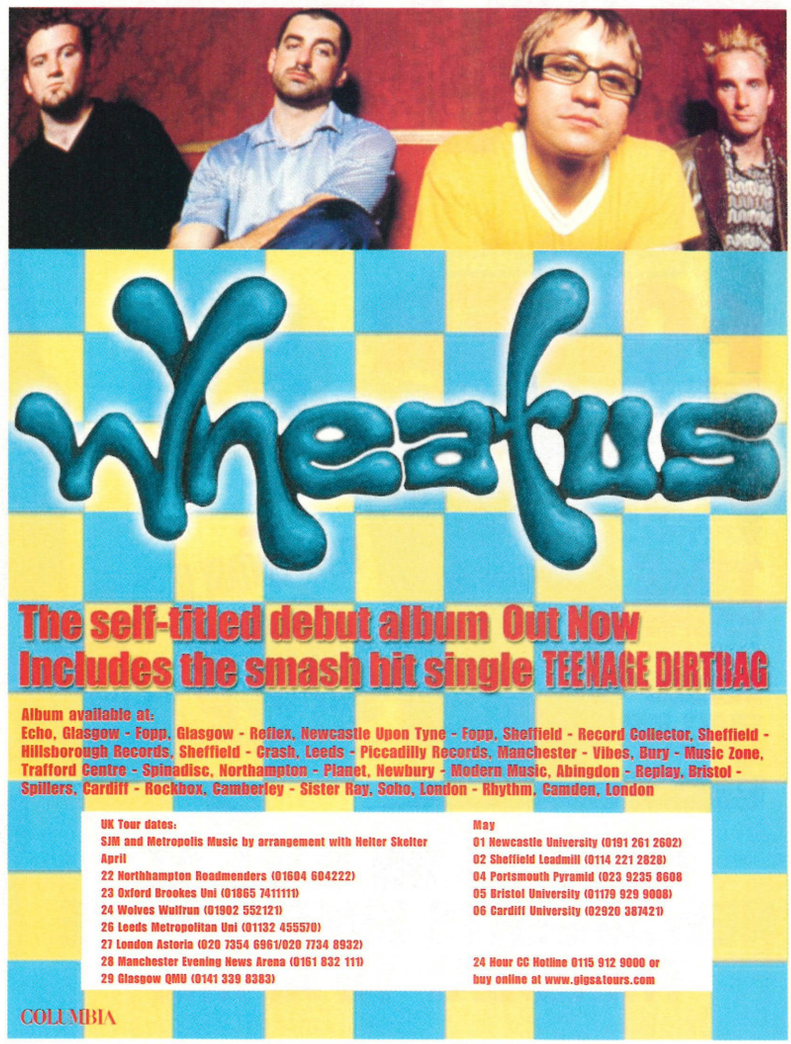
Space Sweep mission: Earn a silver medal in all 14 default missions. Space Sweep is basically a 3D version of the classic arcade title *Asteroids* complete with flying saucer and mines.

Guardian Mantis ship: Earn a gold medal in the Contract Infraction, Secrets On Eos, and The New Resistance.

Havoc ship: Earn a gold medal in the Piracy Above Lok, Valuable Goods, Eye Of The Storm, The Crippling Blow, and Last Stand On Naboo missions.

Darth Maul's Infiltrator ship: Earn a gold medal in all 14 default missions. Just as the Devil get all the best tunes, so the Dark Side gets the best craft in the game. Well worth the slog.

Giant hot rod: Win the Canyon Sprint bonus level, finish before Essara and get a gold metal. A giant hot rod from the LucasArts game Grim Fandango will appear when the canyon opens up after the finish line and you can control it for a few minutes.


Wheatus
The self-titled debut album Out Now
Includes the smash hit single TEENAGE DIRTBAG
Album available at:
Echo, Glasgow - Fopp, Glasgow - Reflex, Newcastle Upon Tyne - Fopp, Sheffield - Record Collector, Sheffield - Hillsborough Records, Sheffield - Crash, Leeds - Piccadilly Records, Manchester - Vibes, Bury - Music Zone, Trafford Centre - Spinadisc, Northampton - Planet, Newbury - Modern Music, Abingdon - Replay, Bristol - Spillers, Cardiff - Rockbox, Camberley - Sister Ray, Soho, London - Rhythm, Camden, London
UK Tour dates:
SJM and Metropolis Music by arrangement with Helter Skelter
April
22 Northampton Roadmenders (01604 604222)
23 Oxford Brookes Uni (01865 741111)
24 Wolves Wulfrun (01902 552121)
26 Leeds Metropolitan Uni (01132 455570)
27 London Astoria (020 7354 6961/020 7734 8932)
28 Manchester Evening News Arena (0161 832 111)
29 Glasgow QMU (0141 339 8383)
May
01 Newcastle University (0191 261 2602)
02 Sheffield Leadmill (0114 221 2828)
04 Portsmouth Pyramid (023 9235 8608
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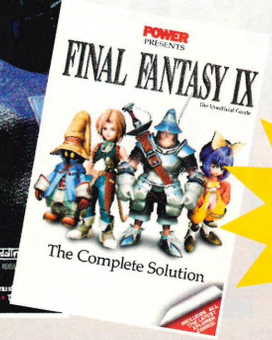

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Q&A

You want answers. We want questions. Quite convenient really. Write in with your PS2 related queries to HardCore Q&A at the usual address, or send an email to us at PS2@futurenet.co.uk and we'll get on it yesterday.

DEMO DILEMMAS

Although I think your mag is great I have a question about the demo disc. It was good to get to play *GT3: A-spec*, but there are plenty of games on the verge of coming out, so why aren't we getting more of them? Surely you could get your hands on a demo as the designers of the games will want to try and sell some copies before it's released, and that can only happen if we, the buyers, see what's on offer in a playable demo. The videos are good, but not as good or useful as getting to play the game.
Paul Newall, Barassie

Congratulations on a great magazine, especially the demo disc, I like many others enjoy playing samples of games before I buy them and *Moto GP, Gran Turismo A-Spec, Dynasty Warriors, ISS, Tekken Tag* along with the rest have been great. However why don't more companies spend the time (and extra money) on producing demos? I've played a demo version of all the games I own and bought them because playing the demo encouraged me to do so.
Robert Perren, via email

We've had a few enquiries on the subject of our demo disc, its contents and how we go about bringing the two together. Who better to explain than Senior Disc Editor, Catherine Channon:

"Many PS2 developers are frantically trying to get their full games finished on schedule, and as such, some demo plans end up going out the window. Others are still trying to familiarise themselves with what's necessary for making one and as yet have been unable to schedule their production schedules to include a demo. However, as everybody becomes more familiar with the technology, more and more developers are planning to produce playable demos, but as with the launch of the PSone, it takes a little time before supply matches demand."

"Part of our job is to ensure that developers make time for demos in their grand gaming scheme of things and show them just how important demos are to readers and to the success of their product."

In other words, more soon.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT?

I have a few questions on future game releases and the like which I'd like you to clear up:
1. Will the price of games ever drop below their high of £40-45? It's just too high for us to be able to get games often, especially if more than one takes our fancy!
2. Will there be the good old Platinum releases on PS2 when a game enters the all time classic age? Will the price drop like with the PSone?
3. When will the Broadband/Hard Disk Drive come out? How many gigabytes will it have?
Alex Halliday, West Lulworth, Dorset

We put your questions to our lovely friends at SCEE. Here's what they had to say...

"Yes, games will come down in price. When we are in a position to pass on savings we will. But at present, with the machine having only just launched, the installed base has only just started to grow. Whilst it costs developers the same or even more to make a game for PS2 than for PSone, there are over six million PlayStation's in the UK, so it's much easier for them to recoup their investment. This means that although PS2 games have the same price bands as PSone games, until the installed base grows, then PS2 games will fall into the upper price bands.

"As for Platinum, there are a number of different criteria that a title must fulfil to be able to launch in the Platinum range, one of them being that the title has to sell a specific number of copies in 12 months. Therefore, it would be at least 12 months into the life of PS2 before we'd be in a position to set up a similar PS2 range."

As for the Hard Disk Drive/Broadband unit, there's no official comment from SCEE but it goes on sale in Japan in July, and OPS2 expects it to be released over here this Autumn. The drive should have a 40Gb capacity and a price of around £200. Watch our Spy section for more details on this and all official peripherals.

CABLE QUANDARY

I've got a problem with S-Video. I have a pre-order PS2 (so first shipment) that only plays games in black and white when using an S-Video cable. It plays games and movies fine with the supplied cable. Cheers, for any answers provided.
Zane Hembest, via email

Check the S-Video input on your TV to see if it's faulty, if not, replace the S-Video lead (is it an official cable?). If you're getting a colour picture with the supplied cable, the PS2 isn't faulty.

ADD-ON ANXIETY

I own a PS2 and am concerned about the new add-ons coming out for it. The Hard Disk Drive seems like a good idea, allowing games to run faster, but if you don't buy this hardware, will you still be able to run certain games in the future? Surely if the device sells well, Sony are going to want bring out an even better one, and if future games are made with it in mind, won't that mean that we'll only be able to play them if we have one? Please put my mind at rest and tell me this won't happen ever!
David Scott, via email

Sony have been keen to push the PS2 as the gateway to The Third Place – a world of downloadable games, music and movies – and the Hard Drive/Broadband Modem unit is obviously key to the realisation of this vision of a single, multimedia hub in your home. But let's not get ahead of ourselves here. The PS2 is, at heart, a gaming console. That's where its heritage lies and the majority of people who own one will be using it primarily for that reason. What's more, it's a console industry given that hardware manufacturers make their real money from selling software for their machines (in the same way that restaurants tend to get their greatest profits from selling drinks). For these reasons it would be very unlikely – not to mention unwise – for Sony to alienate all the gamers out there who've decide for whatever reason not to shell out for the HDD unit. Certainly there will be Internet only versions of games available for PS2 in the future, and anything that opens up the functionality of the machine has got to be good. But when you buy a PS2 you're not buying an incomplete package that'll demand additional investment to keep it from gathering dust and an air of obsolescence. Apart from anything else, it simply wouldn't be very good business sense to do so.

MAKING THE (UP)GRADE?

I am writing to ask about the PS2 DVD driver. Those of us with a PS2 now have version 1.20E, but soon, as with the Japanese console, it'll probably be updated and future buyers will have a better DVD driver and the console at the same price of £299. Will we have to buy upgrades? Has any of this been decided yet?
Richard Anafi, via email

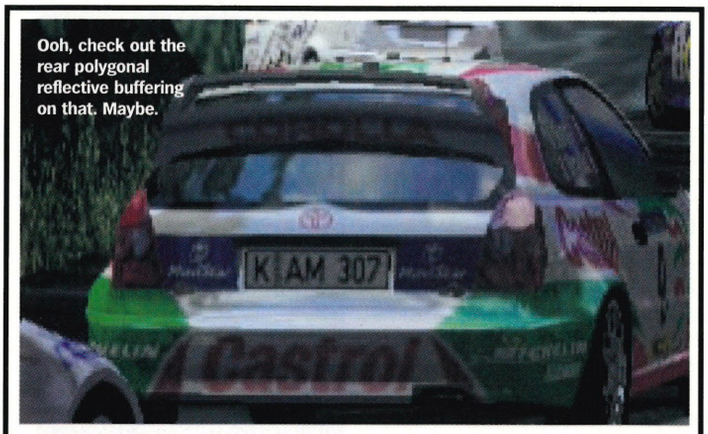
Here's what our man at SCEE had to say:
"As and when DVD driver updates become available, these will either be distributed with additional hardware (the PS2 remote control for example), pre-installed on the machine, or will be made available for free (where applicable) as an easy install on an additional CD."

CUM ON FEEL THE NOIZE

My PS2 makes a loud rumbling noise when a game loads and runs. Is this a mistake? It sounds like a grumbling vintage car engine. Is this normal or should I see a car specialist?
Avril Boyle, via email

Once more to the Sony nerve centre:
"The loud rumbling noise should only occur when the PS2 is accessing large amounts of data from the game CD, when the game is loading for the first time or when it's loading a new level. This is because the CD drive can run at up to 24X speed, much faster than the 2X CD drive in the original PlayStation. This speed enhancement reduces loading times. "

If the problem persists (and indeed for any PS2 technical enquiries) we recommend calling Sony's Customer Careline on 08705 998877.



Ooh, check out the rear polygonal reflective buffering on that. Maybe.

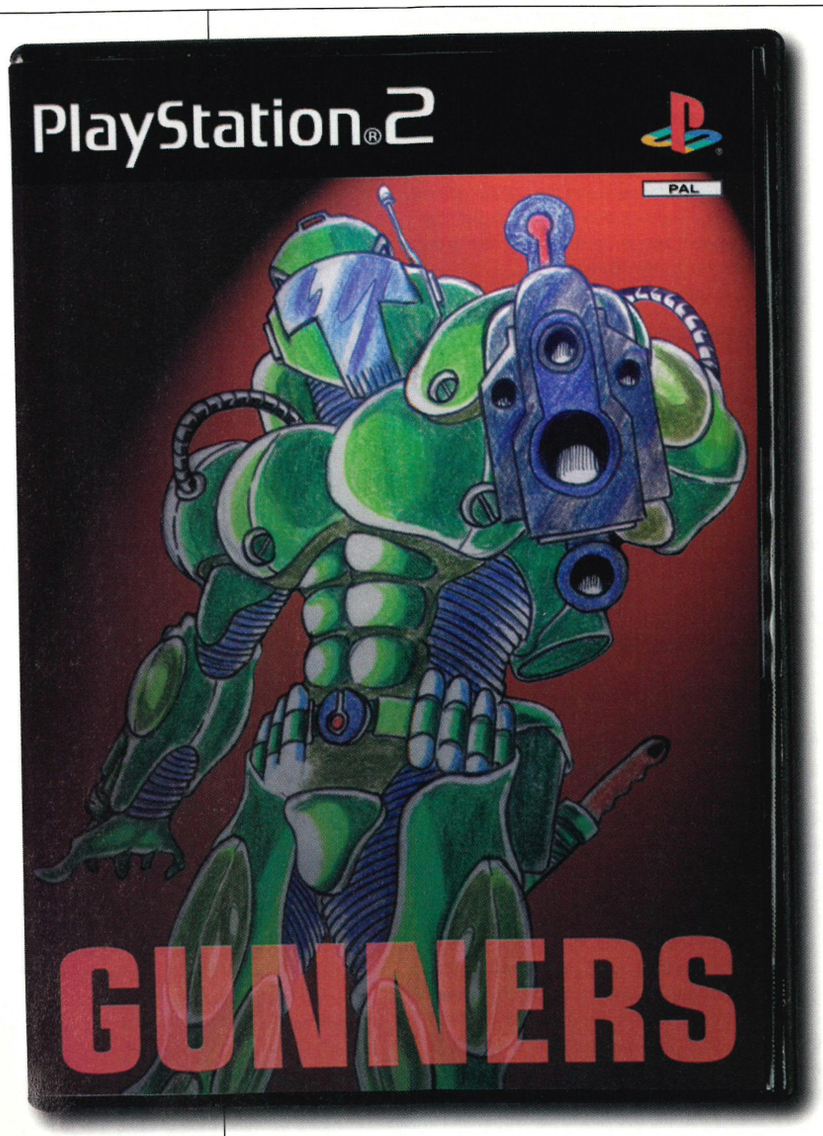
YOU WHAT?

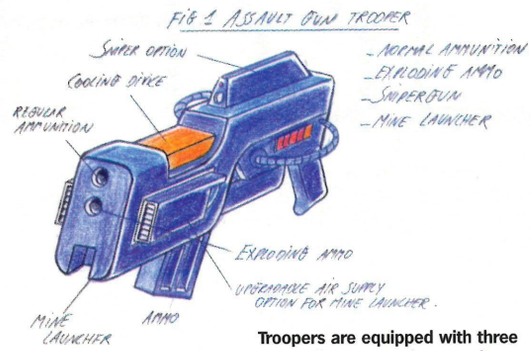
Ignorance banished with our battering ram of understanding.

Is there a piece of jargon that *OPS2* uses that you don't really get? Would you know a polygon if it came up and bit you? What's reflection mapping when it's at home? If there's a PS2 subject or buzz word that you'd like us to illuminate, then let us know at the usual address and we'll shine the pocket torch of righteous clarity at it and print the no-nonsense explanation here. Send enquiries to 'You What' at the *OPS2* address.

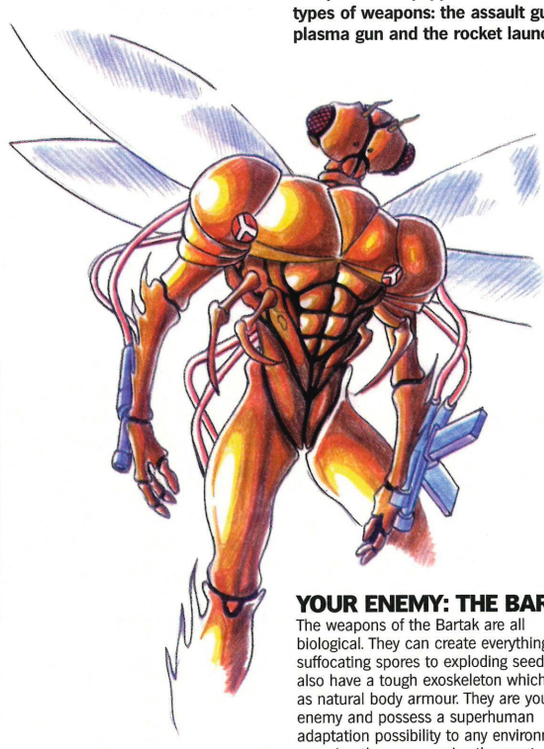
ENDGAME

Opinion/gossip/lists/columns/truths/lies/odds/sods/and some stuff you write





Troopers are equipped with three types of weapons: the assault gun, plasma gun and the rocket launcher.



YOUR ENEMY: THE BARTAK

The weapons of the Bartak are all biological. They can create everything from suffocating spores to exploding seeds. They also have a tough exoskeleton which acts as natural body armour. They are your main enemy and possess a superhuman adaptation possibility to any environment meaning they can survive the most

Designer Genes

Got an idea for a game? Then let us know about it. This month's Designer Genes features *Gunners*: a third-person shooter set in deep space pitting you against the fly-like Bartak...

WRITE TO:
Designer Genes, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email us at **PS2@futurenet.co.uk.** Send us a description of your game idea and try to accompany it with a few sketches or drawings to bring your words to life. If we like your idea we'll send you an *OPS2* T-shirt and a signed print of the box art designed by art Brum, Niki.

#7: GUNNERS/DESIGNED BY: STEVEN GEEREGAT, FAVERE (BELGIUM)

"Earth 2197. For several years wormholes have been a reality. Mankind cannot satisfy his appetite for power and knowledge. With the help of wormholes new galaxies are being explored and new raw materials discovered. On one of the newly discovered planets there's an encounter with the Bartak – a species that shows similarities with our own kind but are not the same...

"*Gunners* takes you on a journey throughout the universe and its different planets. Motherships transport troopers to just outside the atmosphere of a planet and then drop them on the surface by means of transport ships. They are equipped with a full life-support system. Missions are always completed as a team, and they keep in contact by radio. There are different vehicles at your disposal: hovercrafts, tanks, aeroplanes and so on. They are fully equipped with ammo. However you cannot just find ammo dotted any where on the battlefield – it will only be found on a fallen soldier or a defeated enemy ship.

"Sample mission: You are dropped on a swamp planet but before you land you have to clear the area by shooting from the dropship. When you have cleared the zone, you leave the plane in a hovercraft and secure the rivers. Once ashore your team has to attack a fortress while avoiding being caught on the enemy radar. To complete the mission you must find a spot where the mothership can pick you up. The variety in weapons, the multi objective missions and teamplay make *Gunners* a unique experience."

THE EXPERT'S OPINION

CHARLES CECIL
MD of PS2 developer Revolution.

The artwork is excellent, and very evocative. The story is intriguing, if not wholly original. Although the gameplay sounds exciting, it is not clear from the description how the mechanics works. I assume that you are aiming for a third-person shooter in the *Syphon Filter* style.

The idea of teamwork is great a great one (and not unlike Eidos' *Project Eden*) – but can cause complications. Do you intend to give orders to each member of the team, or will they act under their own AI? In summary, this is a great start but a lot of work is still required to fully specify the mechanics behind such an ambitious game design.

OPS2ometer

What's hot, what's not, what's out there...

FEVER

The magnificent moggy massacre that is the new-look ***Fur Fighters,*** currently shaming all lazy PS2 conversions out there.

The outstanding **Avalanches** album – like winter never happened.

The first signs of summer – also like winter never happened.

Angry Sefton tanking all-comers from other, lesser videogame magazines at *ISS* and holding aloft a **nice silver trophy**.

The return of our shambling zombie friends in ***Resi Code: Veronica*** looking just like Mike after a night on the wheat beer.

The reverend's runaround and other silly challenges we've made up in order to waste yet more evenings on ***Crazy Taxi***.

Short-notice *OPS2* substitutes **Lee, Iain and Steve**. Top effort, chaps.

CHILL

Virgin Trains. Easy target we know, but they really are Satan's late-running, arbitrary-buffet-closing carriages.

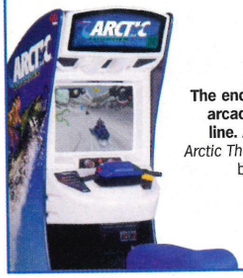
After an imperious start, the rapid decline of ***OPS2*'s five-a-side season**. We even lost to *Official PlayStation Magazine*. The shame.

Army Men. The joke isn't funny any more. And what kind of a name is Trip anyhow?

People banging on about X-box. Some old PC games on a console the size of a bungalow? After you, geek-boy.

Sam being hassled in the pub by **Sting's brother** (honestly) who turns out to be a complete and utter bigot.

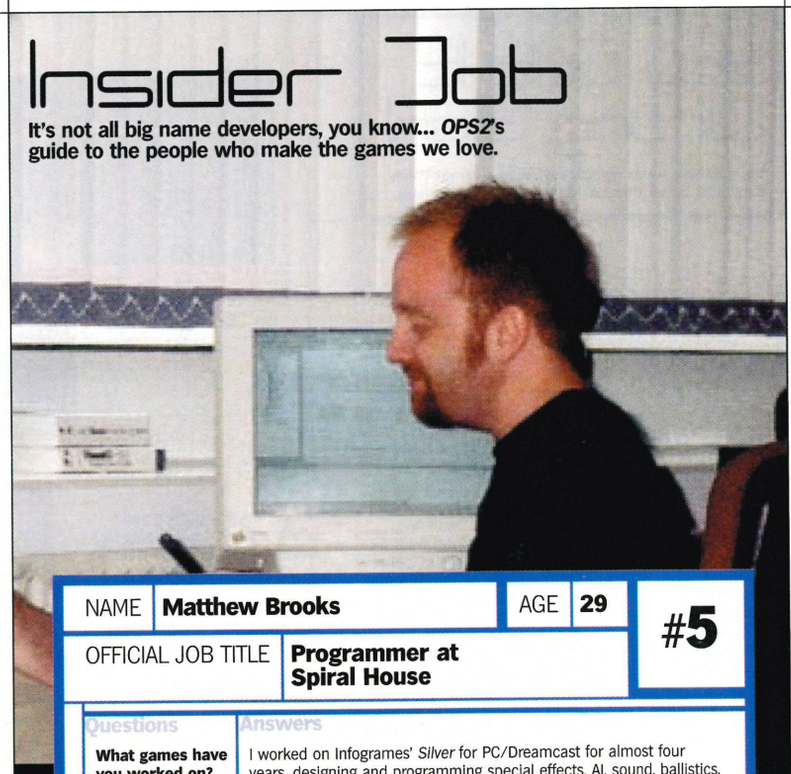
Nopt being able to tell you some of the **pre-E3 info-nuggets** we've got saved until next issue. Trust us, this summer's looking fine...



The end of Midway's arcade production line. And just when *Arctic Thunder* was the best thing ever.

Insider Job

It's not all big name developers, you know... *OPS2*'s guide to the people who make the games we love.



NAME	Matthew Brooks	AGE	29	#5
OFFICIAL JOB TITLE	Programmer at Spiral House			

Questions	Answers
What games have you worked on? What did you do?	I worked on Infogrames' *Silver* for PC/Dreamcast for almost four years, designing and programming special effects, AI, sound, ballistics, and collision detection.
How did you get interested in programming?	I've been playing games and programming since I was ten-years-old and got an old BBC Micro Computer. I've been messing about on computers ever since.
How did you get started in the industry?	I studied for a degree in Computer Science at Manchester University and got interested in computer graphics and special effects. I used a particle systems project I wrote at University to get me my first job.
What was your first job – who was it for, what did you do?	It was with Ocean Software – I started off doing odds and sods, before moving on to do *Silver*. The weirdest event I remember was after Infogrames bought Ocean, they flew all their staff to Sicily to celebrate their 15th birthday. When we got off the plane there were people who had obviously been paid to clap slowly at us as we walked from the plane to the bus. And when we arrived at the resort we were greeted by Bruno Bonnell – who was flying through the air on a trapeze. Truly unforgettable.
Who are your heroes?	Shigeru Miyamoto. And whoever is responsible at Sega for allowing innovative off-the-wall concepts to be made into games, in an industry where publishers see sequels and clones as the best bet.
Who's made the best games?	See the above.
What do you look at for influence?	Games, films and animation.
How do you get the best performance from a games platform?	Design your engine to match the architecture of the platform you're programming for. Don't rub it up the wrong way.
What are you most proud of?	Our brand spanking new engine.
The best thing about your job?	The buzz you get when you're on a roll. I think that's probably entering the geek zone though.
And the worst?	The frustration of code that really should work, but doesn't.
How do you see your job changing with the advent of PS2?	Learning how to get the best out of it. I don't think the manuals were designed for human comprehension.
What advice would you give to someone who wanted to do your job?	When I was younger almost everyone who was playing computer games was doing so on a home computer – we all had the opportunity to learn to program, without having to have all the tools you need to develop games today. Tax dodge or not, Yabasic has reopened this door again, so have a go and see what you can do.

You Got It Wrong, Son!

Do you think we've unfairly reviewed a game? Think you know better than us? Then tell us about it here.

WRITE TO
You Got It Wrong, Son!, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.
Or email PS2@futurenet.co.uk.
Prizes to be won!

Ian Evans, Newport

"I don't know how *Shadow Of Memories* got eight of out ten but whoever reviewed it clearly has no idea of what makes a good game. Games need to be involving, they need to grip you like a vice and draw you in with their great gameplay, not just lead you through relatively interesting narratives and endless FMV sequences – no matter how interesting, nice looking or informative they might be.

"The graphics are really plain, with no depth or character to them. It hardly makes the game atmospheric does it? I don't expect to pay close to £40 for what is essentially little more than an interactive movie (with very little actual interaction). *Shadow Of Memories* needed to be closer to it's cousin *Silent Hill* to make it a success, it needed to be scary, not just mildly intriguing and what's more, it needed to be far longer. I was able to complete the whole game in less than a day, and even then the ending was severely disappointing. I just hope that *Silent Hill 2* is much better than this."

Graphics **04**/Sound **03**/Gameplay **02**/Life span **03**
Overall 04

SHADOW OF MEMORIES
The best and most intriguing plot for any PS2 game seen so far or just an excuse to watch an overly long film for an inflated price? Round one!

Lee Chambers, Nuneaton

"Shadow Of Memories is perhaps the most underrated game on the PS2 and one I hoped you would have had the courage to mark even higher than you did. My mates say that it lacks gameplay but it isn't the case. Although there is a considerable amount of FMV that may put some people off, you are ultimately in charge of your own destiny and trying to solve the mystery of your own death is one of the most fascinating concepts I've ever come across in a videogame. The end isn't really the end either because I've already discovered three endings to the game, each more shocking than the last. This has to be seen, not as a game that failed to live up to the likes of *Silent Hill* but a game that creates for itself a brilliant niche all of its own.

"I challenge anyone not to reach the end of the game and be left totally in awe of what they have just witnessed. This is a truly fine game that blends first class gameplay with a thoroughly gripping story line. Perhaps the finest game on the PS2."

Graphics **07**/Sound **08**/Gameplay **09**/Life Span **09**
Overall 09

Brainstorm

148 pages of PS2 in handy blipvert form... Follow the page numbers to see what you've missed.

"A group of trumping creatures guffing pathetically" p.109

"Passers-by stopping to watch the game dressed only in their undies" p.30

"Can we walk your dog please sir?" p.59

"A lifetime of chicken chasing and crop rotation" p.93

"A grand nipple count of two" p.66

"Overrun with flesh-craving undead weirdos, one-armed sucker mutants and transexual tyrants. Just like Ayia Napa" p.72

"Giant frankfurters can take on strategic significance" p.123

"The constant threat of Lou Bega" p.73

"Kicks off with a song and a dance and a hungry giant swallowing some fat bloke" p.22

"Pixel powered mush masking" p.66

"Alan Titchmarsh being rapaciously devoured by Cerberus, the three-headed canine guardian of the Underworld" p.64

"For less than six pounds you can buy models of potbellied baldies" p.59

"The Hawaiian shirt-wearing git that was Timmy Mallet" p.32

"More often than not, we accidentally unleashed a horde of slavering beasts intent on ripping our throats out" p.28

"Naomi is strutting down the catwalk with the best part of a mountain leopard on her boney back" p.17

"Pants boy gets funky with his feline friend" p.31

ILLUSTRATION: MR JAGO

The Quiz

Time to sharpen your headbrains on the grindstone that is the *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine* Quiz. Harder than you!

COVER DISC CONUNDRUM

Answers on the DVD...

1. How many engines does Obi Wan Kenobi's ship have in *Super Bombad Racing*?

2. In *Sky Odyssey*, how heavy is the BF-109?

3. What number is visible by the frozen dock in the *Red Faction* video?

4. How many swamp monsters do you need to kill before leaving the first chamber in our *Warriors Of Might And Magic* demo?

5. Which video features a tartan midget screaming "Yeah, and there's more where that came from!"

BATTLE OF THE PLANETS

It's coming to PS2 so test your *BotP* knowledge.

1. Which member of G-Force was grown in a laboratory?

2. What is the Japanese name for G-Force?

3. Who operates the weapons on the Phoenix?

4. What do G-Force say just before the ship transforms into the fiery Phoenix?

5. What is the name of G-Force's boss?

SEGA HEAD SCRATCHER

Do you know which Sega studios developed which games?

1. *House Of The Dead*

2. *Virtua Striker*

3. *Sega Rally*

4. *Virtua Fighter 4*

5. *Get Bass*

SPACE ACE

Can you match these famous space ships to the games?

1. Dianoga

2. Jehuty

3. Gold UFO

4. Sith Interceptor

5. The Jim Dandy

SIDEKICKS

Match the hapless sidekicks to some all time great videogame heroes.

1. Earl

2. Tails

3. Sparx

4. Coco

5. ADA

DRAGON TEAR HUMAN

It's the funny word round. Solve these anagrams of games featured in this month's issue.

1. Damn Fool Hero
2. Frieght Surf
3. We Say Crack
4. Rodfinger
5. Fetid Acorn

EVIL LAST NAME

Give the surnames of these characters from the *Resident Evil* series:

1. Jill

2. Albert

3. Chris

4. Steve

5. Ada

WACKY RACES

And they're off! But who drives these crazily named cars?

1. The Bullet Proof Bomb

2. The Arkansas Chug-a-Bug

3. The Buzzwagon

4. The Convert-a-Car

5. The Pink Compact

ACRONYM

What are these are these acronyms?

1. STARS

2. ADSL

3. SSX

4. SCEJ

5. MDK

SEQUEL SPECTACULAR

Which characters were in the original games?

1. Eddy Gordo (*Tekken Tag*)

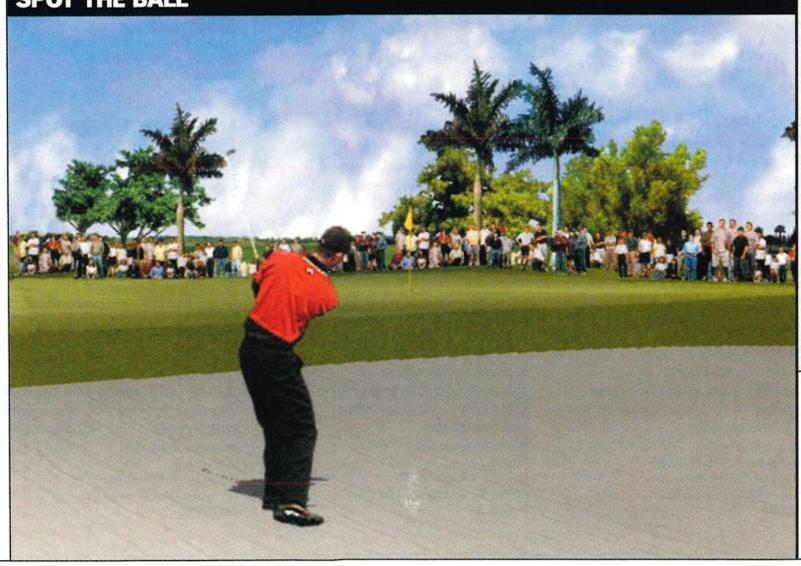
2. Revolver Ocelot (*Metal Gear Solid 2*)

3. James Sanderson (*Silent Hill 2*)

4. Popka (*Klonoa 2*)

5. Clair Redfield (*Resident Evil: Code Veronica*)

SPOT THE BALL



ANSWERS (USE A MIRROR)

Wacky Races.
1. The Ant Hill Mob
2. Luke and Blubber Bear
3. Rufus Ruffcut and Sawtooth
4. Professor Pat Pending
5. Penelope Pitstop

Cover Disc Conundrum
1. Three
2. 2450 kg
3. 26
4. Six
5. Giants: Citizen Kabuto

Battle of the Planets
1. Keyop
2. Gatchaman
3. Mark
4. "Transmute!"
5. Chief Anderson

SEGA Head Scratcher
1. Wow Entertainment
2. Amusement Vision
3. United Game Artists
4. AM2
5. Wow Entertainment

Space Ace
1. Star Wars: Starfighter
2. ZOE
3. Sky Odyssey
4. Super Bombad Racing
5. MDK 2 Armageddon

Sidekicks
1. Tejeian
2. Sonic
3. Spyro
4. Crash Bandicoot
5. Leo

Sequel Spectacular
1. No. First appears in Tekken 3.
2. Yes. Snake's first major enemy.
3. No. Harry Mason was first hero.
4. No. First seen in the sequel.
5. No. First seen in RE 2.

Dragon Tear Human
1. Medal Of Honor
2. Fur Fighters
3. Wacky Races
4. Ring Of Red
5. Red Faction

Evil Last Name
1. Valentine
2. Wesker
3. Redfield
4. Burnside
5. Wong

Acronym
1. Special Tactics and Rescue Squad
2. Asymmetrical Digital Subscriber Line
3. Snowboard Super Cross
4. Sony Computer Entertainment Japan.
5. Murder, Death, Kill

Spot The Ball

YOUR RATING

35-46 Quail's egg

25-35 Duck's egg

15-25 Chicken's egg

0-15 Dog's egg

Database

Want to know more? Need to know a release date? What about a game in the future? Something gone wrong? Here's all the info you could ever need...

3DO 01895 456 700
www.3doeurope.com
3DO Europe, 21-23 Mossop St, London SW3 2LY

ACCLAIM 0207 344 5000
www.acclaimnation.com
112-120 Brompton Rd, Knightsbridge, London SW3 1JJ

ACTIVISION 01895 456 789
www.activision.com
Long Island House, Suite 3a, 1-4 Marple Way, London W3 0RQ

CODEMASTERS 01926 814 132
www.codemasters.com
Stoneythorpe, Southam, Warwickshire CV33 ODL

CRAVE 00353 617 020
www.cravegames.com
58, Canalot Studios, 222 Kensal Rd, London W10 5BN

CRYO 0121 250 5072
www.cryo-interactive.com
186a Stratford Rd, Shirley, Solihull B90 3BQ

DISNEY INTERACTIVE 0990 998 877
www.disney.co.uk
PlayStation Careline, PO Box 2047, London W1A 3DN

EIDOS INTERACTIVE 0121 356 0831
www.eidos.co.uk
1 Hartfield Rd, Wimbledon, London SW19 3RU

ELECTRONIC ARTS 0870 243 2435
www.uk.ea.com
2000 Hillswood Drive, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 0EU

EMPIRE 0800 783 0156
www.empire.co.uk
The Spire, 677 High Rd, North Finchley N12 ODA

FOX INTERACTIVE 01932 454 032
www.foxinteractive.com
2000 Hillswood Drive, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 0EU

INFOGRAMES 0208 222 9700
www.infogrames.com
116 Baker St, London W1M 1LB

JVC INTERACTIVE 0207 240 3121
www.jvc.com
44 Wellington St, Covent Garden, London WC2E 7BD

KONAMI 0208 582 5573
www.konami-europe.com
7/9 The Oaks, Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 7LF

LEGO 01753 495 453
www.lego.com
33 Bath Rd, Slough, Berks SL1 3UF

MICROIDS 0208 901 7388
www.microids.com
2 Gayton Rd, Harrow, London HA1 2XU

MIDAS INTERACTIVE 01223 522 000
www.midas-interactive.co.uk
Matrix House, Cambridge Business Park CB4 OHH

MIDWAY 0207 938 4488
www.midway.com
96 Kensington High St, London W8 4SG

SCEE 0990 998 877
www.playstation-europe.com
PlayStation Careline, PO Box 2047, London W1A 3DN

SCI 0207 585 3308
www.sci.co.uk
11 Ivory House, Plantation Wharf, York Rd, London SW11 3TN

TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE 0870 124 2222
www.take2games.com
Saxon House, 2-4 Victoria St, Windsor, Berks SL4 1BY

THQ 01483 767 656
www.thq.com
Dukes Court, Duke St, Woking, Surrey GU21 5BH

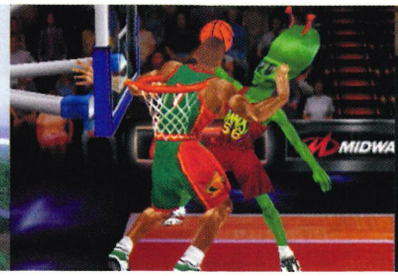
UBI SOFT 0208 944 9000
www.ubisoft.co.uk
1 Weir Rd, Wimbledon, London SW19 8UX

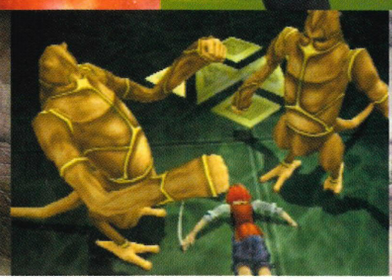
VIRGIN INTERACTIVE 0207 551 4222
www.vie.co.uk
74A Charlotte St, London W1P 1LR

The Shortlist

If it's for PS2, and on sale in the UK then we've played it, argued about it and played it some more. Our potted judgements on the 66 games available begin below.

Clockwise from top: *Star Wars: Starfighter, Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001, Zone Of The Enders, Robot Warlords, 4x4 Evolution, Evergrace, Quake III, NBA Hoopz and Sky Odyssey.*





4X4 EVOLUTION
☐Publisher: **Take 2**
☐Developer: **Terminal Reality**
In the tradition of *Wild Wild Racing* and *Smuggler's Run*, but nowhere near as fun.
Reviewed **Issue #06**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **06**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **06**/Life span **06**
Overall 05

7 BLADES
☐Publisher: **Konami**
☐Developer: **KCEJ**
Lacks the scale of *DW2* featuring clumsy visuals and repetitive gameplay.
Reviewed **Issue #05**
Players **1**
Graphics **06**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **05**
Overall 06

AQUA AQUA: WETRIX 2.0
☐Publisher: **SCi**
☐Developer: **Zed Two**
Addictive, well-realised update on the familiar *Wetrix* puzzle game formula.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **06**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **07**
Overall 07

ARMORED CORE 2
☐Publisher: **Ubi Soft**
☐Developer: **From Software**
Enjoyable first-person shooter offering interchangeable and customisable robo-body parts.
Reviewed **Issue #04**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **07**/Sound **06**
Gameplay **07**/Life span **07**
Overall 07

DEAD OR ALIVE 2
☐Publisher: **SCEE**
☐Developer: **Tecmo**
Graphically superior to *Tekken*, *DOA2*'s appeal lies in its open arenas and blistering frame rate.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **08**/Sound **04**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **06**
Overall 07

DISNEY'S DINOSAUR
☐Publisher: **Ubi Soft**
☐Developer: **Ubi Soft**
A poor, and seemingly rushed spin-off of the movie of the same name. Even the kids will tire of this very quickly.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1**
Graphics **03**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **04**/Life span **03**
Overall 04

DONALD DUCK: QUACK ATTACK
☐Publisher: **Ubi Soft**
☐Developer: **Disney Interactive**
A Disney game that is sadly more 'cack' than 'quack'.
Reviewed **Issue #04**
Players **1**
Graphics **05**/Sound **06**
Gameplay **02**/Life span **03**
Overall 04

DRAGON'S LAIR
☐Publisher: **Digital Leisure**
☐Developer: **Cinematronics**
Only those who are nostalgic for the identical 17-year-old arcade title will want to play this.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1**
Graphics **03**/Sound **02**
Gameplay **02**/Life span **01**
Overall 02

DRAGON'S LAIR II: TIMEWARP
☐Publisher: **Digital Leisure**
☐Developer: **Cinematronics**
Like its predecessor, this DVD update is a painfully unplayable affair.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1**
Graphics **03**/Sound **01**
Gameplay **01**/Life span **01**
Overall 01

DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S
☐Publisher: **EA**
☐Developer: **Squaresoft**
If this dismal racer is anything to go by Square should stick to RPGs.
Reviewed **Issue #05**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **07**/Sound **04**
Gameplay **03**/Life span **07**
Overall 04

ETERNAL RING
☐Publisher: **Ubi Soft**
☐Developer: **From Software**
Generic Japanese RPG sadly lacking in originality and graphical flair.
Reviewed **Issue #05**
Players **1**
Graphics **03**/Sound **04**
Gameplay **03**/Life span **03**
Overall 03

EVERGRACE
☐Publisher: **Ubi Soft/Crave Entertainment**
☐Developer: **From Software**
A depressing RPG which systematically fails to engage at all levels.
Reviewed **Issue #06**
Players **1**
Graphics **06**/Sound **03**
Gameplay **02**/Life span **03**
Overall 02

DYNASTY WARRIORS 2
☐Publisher: **Midas Interactive**
☐Developer: **KOEI**
DW2 mixes strategy with sword-slashing and, um, horse riding.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1**
Graphics **08**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **07**/Life span **06**
Overall 07

ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD
☐Publisher: **Konami**
☐Developer: **KCEO**
Graphically impressive multi-part athletics sim built up of ten events.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **09**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **04**
Overall 07

ESPN NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT
☐Publisher: **Konami**
☐Developer: **KCEO**
Frustrating gameplay quirks put this below its EA Sports rival.
Reviewed **Issue #05**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **07**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **06**/Life span **05**
Overall 06

ESPN NBA 2NIGHT
☐Publisher: **Konami**
☐Developer: **KCEO**
Proves the age old cliché – only fun for gamers who like basketball…
Reviewed **Issue #05**
Players **1-8**
Graphics **07**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **05**
Overall 06

ESPN WINTER X-GAMES SNOWBOARDING
☐Publisher: **Konami**
☐Developer: **KCEO**
Realistic snowboarding sim, hampered by bland graphics, and slow controls.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-5**
Graphics **06**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **07**
Overall 06

F1 CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2000
☐Publisher: **EA Sports**
☐Developer: **EA/Visual Sciences**
The hardcore F1 fan will probably find this a little too easy.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1-4** (22 in Time Trial)
Graphics **07**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **06**/Life span **06**
Overall 06

F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP
☐Publisher: **Video System**
☐Developer: **Ubi Soft**
Good attention to detail but it adds nothing to the PSone versions.
Reviewed **Issue #06**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **06**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **06**
Overall 05

FANTAVISION
☐Publisher: **SCEE**
☐Developer: **SCEI**
The world's first fireworks game. Modest in size but highly original.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **08**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **05**
Overall 07

FIFA 2001
☐Publisher: **EA Sports**
☐Developer: **EA Sports (Canada)**
The first installment of *FIFA* on PS2 makes the same errors as its predecessors. All mouth, no football.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **10**/Sound **09**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **05**
Overall 07

GRADIUS III & IV
☐Publisher: **Konami**
☐Developer: **KCET**
Pointless reprise of 2D, side-scrolling spaceship shoot-'em-up from 1990.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **02**/Sound **03**
Gameplay **03**/Life span **02**
Overall 03

GUN GRIFFON BLAZE
☐Publisher: **Swing**
☐Developer: **GameArts**
Although flawed, *GGB* is very entertaining and captures the imagination with robotic flair.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1**
Graphics **07**/Sound **06**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **06**
Overall 07

H30 SURFING
☐Publisher: **Take 2**
☐Developer: **ASCII**
A depressingly inadequate extreme sports sim. An infuriating camera angle fails to show all the fun you won't be having.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **04**/Sound **04**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **04**
Overall 04

HOLOGRAM TIME TRAVELER
☐Publisher: **Digital Leisure**
☐Developer: **Sega**
Porting over of a game that was never really popular when it first appeared.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1**
Graphics **00**/Sound **00**
Gameplay **01**/Life span **00**
Overall 00

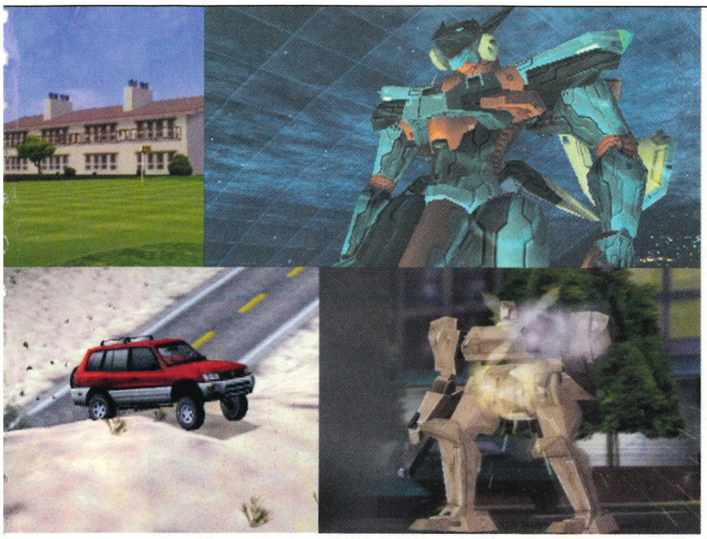
INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER
☐Publisher: **Konami**
☐Developer: **KCEO**
ISS on PS2 has added genuine squads (at last) and more instant gratification with this KCEO/N64 makeover.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **07**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **08**
Overall 08

KESSEN
☐Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
☐Developer: **KOEI**
Real-time strategy on a huge scale with 100 warriors on screen at once.
Reviewed **Issue #04**
Players **1**
Graphics **08**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **07**/Life span **08**
Overall 07

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001
☐Publisher: **EA Sports**
☐Developer: **EA Sports**
Competent boxing sim, not good enough to earn its royal status though.
Reviewed **Issue #05**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **08**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **06**/Life span **05**
Overall 06

MADDEN NFL 2001
☐Publisher: **EA Sports**
☐Developer: **EA Sports**
PS2's most rewarding sports game so far – boasting extremely good presentation too.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **09**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **09**
Overall 08

MIDNIGHT CLUB
☐Publisher: **Rockstar**
☐Developer: **Angel Studios**
Speedy urban racing game, boasting impressively huge NYC and London environments – but not much else.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **05**/Sound **06**
Gameplay **04**/Life span **04**
Overall 05



MOTO GP
☐Publisher: **SCEE**
☐Developer: **Namco**
Touted as *Gran Turismo* on two wheels, *Moto GP* is a fantastic simulation of motorbike racing.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **08**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **07**/Life span **06**
Overall 07

NBA HOOPZ
☐Publisher: **Midway**
☐Developer: **Eurocom**
The most enjoyable basketball sim on PS2 yet. Three-on-three with no rules in the tradition of *NBA Jam*.
Reviewed: **Issue #06**
Players **1-6**
Graphics **06**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **07**/Life span **05**
Overall 06

NBA LIVE 2001
☐Publisher: **EA Sports**
☐Developer: **EA Sports**
Solid and playable EA franchise. Won't convert non-believers though.
Reviewed: **Issue #05**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **07**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **04**/Life span **05**
Overall 06

NHL 2001
☐Publisher: **EA Sports**
☐Developer: **EA Sports (Canada)**
EA Sports' perennial ice hockey licence has stepped up to the mark for its PS2 debut.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **09**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **07**
Overall 08

ONI
☐Publisher: **Rockstar**
☐Developer: **Bungie Software**
PS2 has a new female hero at last. Pioneering new character animation in an enjoyable first-person romp.
Reviewed **Issue #05**
Players **1**
Graphics **07**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **07**/Life span **07**
Overall 07

ORPHEN
☐Publisher: **Activision**
☐Developer: **Shade Inc**
Disappointing anime inspired Japanese RPG, short on thrills.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1**
Graphics **04**/Sound **03**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **03**
Overall 04

POOLMASTER
☐Publisher: **Take 2**
☐Developer: **Ask**
Despite tidy ball physics the gameplay is dull and not as good as a pub visit.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **04**/Sound **06**
Gameplay **06**/Life span **04**
Overall 05

QUAKE III StarPlayer
☐Publisher: **EA**
☐Developer: **Bullfrog**
At last, a PS2 first-person shooter that seriously challenges the might of *TimeSplitters*. In four-player mode this is the best multiplayer game yet.
Reviewed **Issue #06**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **10**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **09**/Life span **07**
Overall 09

RAYMAN REVOLUTION
☐Publisher: **Ubi Soft**
☐Developer: **Ubi Soft**
Animation-quality graphics elevate this platformer above others of its kind.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **09**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **08**
Overall 08

RC REVENGE PRO
☐Publisher: **Acclaim**
☐Developer: **Acclaim (Cheltenham)**
Last-gen graphics, a sluggish frame rate and less than taxing gameplay.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **02**/Sound **03**
Gameplay **03**/Life span **03**
Overall 03

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2
☐Publisher: **Midway**
☐Developer: **Midway**
Marvellous arcade-based comedy boxing game. Fight as, or against Michael Jackson. It's your choice…
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **07**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **07**/Life span **06**
Overall 07

RIDGE RACER V
☐Publisher: **SCEE**
☐Developer: **Namco**
Jagged edges, limited size and a general lack of originality scupper this PS2 launch title.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **06**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **07**
Overall 07

ROBOT WARLORDS
☐Publisher: **Midas Interactive**
☐Developer: **DaZZ**
With other superior mech games on the PS2 market, this fares badly.
Reviewed **Issue #06**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **06**/Sound **04**
Gameplay **03**/Life span **03**
Overall 04

SHADOW OF MEMORIES
☐Publisher: **Konami**
☐Developer: **KCET**
PS2's most filmic game yet will keep you hooked till its surprising climax.
Reviewed **Issue #05**
Players **1**
Graphics **07**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **09**
Overall 08

SILENT SCOPE
☐Publisher: **Konami**
☐Developer: **KCEO**
Slick but simple shooting gallery-style game, where you play a police sniper.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1**
Graphics **08**/Sound **06**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **07**
Overall 07

SILPHEED: THE LOST PLANET
☐Publisher: **Swing**
☐Developer: **Treasure/GameArts**
Tedious top-scrolling shoot-'em-up with shocking slow-down.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1**
Graphics **04**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **03**/Life span **02**
Overall 04

SKY ODYSSEY
☐Publisher: **SCEE**
☐Developer: **Cross (for SCEI)**
A flight sim with a difference. You don't have to shoot anything, just complete crazy missions.
Reviewed **Issue #06**
Players **1**
Graphics **07**/Sound **07**
Gameplay **09**/Life span **08**
Overall 08

SKY SURFER
☐Publisher: **Virgin Interactive**
☐Developer: **Idea Factory**
The idea of *Sky Surfer* is great – the game is just dull.
Reviewed **Issue #04**
Players **1**
Graphics **05**/Sound **04**
Gameplay **02**/Life span **02**
Overall 03

SMUGGLER'S RUN
☐Publisher: **Rockstar**
☐Developer: **Angel Studios**
Impressively large free-roaming playing environments in this mission-based driving melee.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **08**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **06**/Life span **07**
Overall 07

SPACE ACE
☐Publisher: **Digital Leisure**
☐Developer: **Cinematronics**
This successor to *Dragon's Lair* hasn't exactly aged very well.
Reviewed **Issue #04**
Players **1**
Graphics **02**/Sound **02**
Gameplay **01**/Life span **01**
Overall 01

SSX StarPlayer
☐Publisher: **EA Sports Big**
☐Developer: **EA Sports (Canada)**
Brilliant high-speed snowboard game packed with crazy courses.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **09**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **08**
Overall 09

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER StarPlayer
☐Publisher: **Activision**
☐Developer: **LucasArts**
The first *Star Wars* game to grace the PlayStation 2. Thankfully, it's an absolute blinder, with engaging missions, smooth graphics and film-perfect sound effects.
Reviewed **Issue #06**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **09**/Sound **10**
Gameplay **09**/Life span **09**
Overall 09

STREET FIGHTER EX3
☐Publisher: **Capcom Eurosoft**
☐Developer: **Arika**
Not much new on offer to impress the devoted fans in *Street Fighter*'s first PlayStation 2 fist-fight.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **06**/Sound **06**
Gameplay **07**/Life span **07**
Overall 07

SUMMONER
☐Publisher: **THQ**
☐Developer: **Volition**
Sprawling RPG epic. A truly original plot let down only by patchy graphics and a dodgy draw distance.
Reviewed **Issue #04**
Players **1**
Graphics **05**/Sound **09**
Gameplay **07**/Life span **09**
Overall 08

SUPER BUST-A-MOVE
☐Publisher: **Acclaim**
☐Developer: **Taito**
Another update of a classic game, but a pointless one. Nothing new.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **07**/Sound **04**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **02**
Overall 05

SWING AWAY GOLF
☐Publisher: **EA Sports**
☐Developer: **T&E Soft**
Cutesy PSone golf sim let down by a sloppy PS2 conversion.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **03**/Sound **02**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **04**
Overall 03

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT
☐Publisher: **SCEE**
☐Developer: **Namco**
Fantastically playable and graphically spectacular beat-'em-up. Not exactly a new instalment but the new tagging moves will keep the fans happy while they wait for *Tekken 4*.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **09**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **07**
Overall 08

TG DARE DEVIL
☐Publisher: **Kemco**
☐Developer: **Papaya Studios**
Fun driving sim featuring Minis and Beetles racing round cities like Paris and London. No great depth here though.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **05**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **04**
Overall 05

THEME PARK WORLD
☐Publisher: **EA**
☐Developer: **Bullfrog**
Whether you like the thrill of the roller coaster, or the feeling of being in total control, you'll love this God sim.
Reviewed **Issue #03**
Players **1**
Graphics **07**/Sound **08**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **06**
Overall 07

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2001
☐Publisher: **EA Sports**
☐Developer: **Ea Sports**
An enjoyable golf sim laced with the star appeal of Tiger Woods. Suffers from a strangely random control system though.
Reviewed **Issue #06**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **06**/Sound **03**
Gameplay **06**/Life span **05**
Overall 06

TIMESPLITTERS StarPlayer
☐Publisher: **Eidos**
☐Developer: **Free Radical Design**
Fast and frantic multiplayer first-person shooter. One of the best 'Shoot your buddies' game on PS2. May show its age come the recent launch of *Quake III Revolution*.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **09**/Sound **09**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **09**
Overall 09

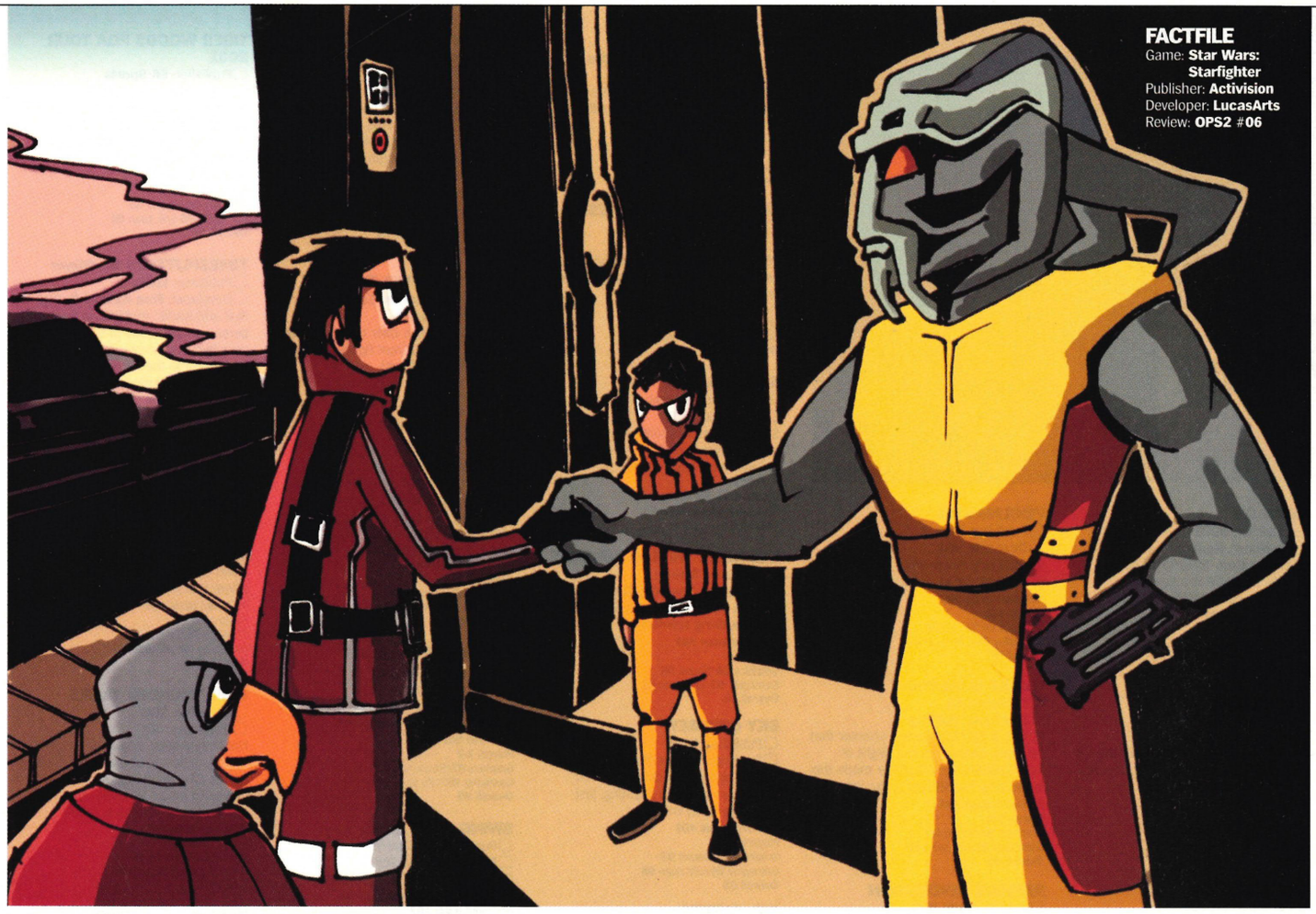
UNREAL TOURNAMENT
☐Publisher: **Infogrames**
☐Developer: **Epic Games**
Gory, over-the-top, immensely playable first-person shooter. Unfortunately let down by a slow frame rate in four-player mode.
Reviewed **Issue #04**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **06**/Sound **09**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **07**
Overall 08

WDL: THUNDER TANKS
☐Publisher: **3DO**
☐Developer: **3DO**
Not the greatest single-player game as there is little fun to be had in blowing up the CPU controlled tanks but proves to be an absolute romp in four-player Deathmatch mode.
Reviewed **Issue #05**
Players **1-4**
Graphics **08**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **08**/Life span **07**
Overall 07

WILD WILD RACING
☐Publisher: **Rage**
☐Developer: **Rage**
Off-road buggy racing game with merely acceptable looks, and initially discouraging handling. Stick with it though, and it gets much more satisfying and strangely addictive.
Reviewed **Issue #01**
Players **1-2**
Graphics **06**/Sound **05**
Gameplay **06**/Life span **07**
Overall 06

X-SQUAD
☐Publisher: **EA**
☐Developer: **EA/Square**
First-person stealth/shooter featuring a distinct lack of attention to detail. You play one part of a futuristic *A-Team* on a mission to save the world. Enjoyable enough but sadly never inspiring.
Reviewed **Issue #02**
Players **1**
Graphics **05**/Sound **06**
Gameplay **05**/Life span **06**
Overall 05

ZONE OF THE ENDERS StarPlayer
☐Publisher: **Konami**
☐Developer: **KCEJ**
Cool graphics and intuitive controls make this a mech game with soul. But then what did we expect from Hideo Kojima? Oh, and there's the small matter of that free *MGS2* demo…
Reviewed **Issue #06**
Players **1**
Graphics **10**/Sound **09**
Gameplay **09**/Life span **06**
Overall 09



FACTFILE
Game: **Star Wars: Starfighter**
Publisher: **Activision**
Developer: **LucasArts**
Review: **OPS2 #06**

#07 Star Wars: Starfighter

Lucy McLauchlan captures the final tear-jerking moments of LucasArts' superb 3D space blaster.

WHAT?

So, what's all this about then?

After saving Princess Amidala, destroying Droid factories on Eos and blowing up the Trade Federation's evil Droid Control Ship, the four characters of *Star Wars: Starfighter* share a tender moment of friendship. Pirate scoundrel Nym, Naboo pilot Rhys Dallows, beautiful mercenary Vana Sage and the floppy-conked Toydarian Reti have survived scary deep space dogfights, daring night-time planetary raids and Trade Federation all-out assaults to become new legends in this pre-Darth Vader *Star Wars* universe.

HOW?

What do you have to do to get here? What the devil is going on? Does that blue guy go to the gym? Here's our quick and easy guide.

To witness the fab four's final FMV sequence, you must first complete all of the 14 preceeding missions on any difficulty setting, ending in the nasty battle against the Mercenary Leader's well-armed, fully-shielded fighter, located deep inside the Droid Control Ship. Alternatively, if the Force is really something you can't be arsed to use, just do the following. Enter OVERSEER in the 'Codes' input screen to unlock all the missions at once, then go straight to the 'Farewell' level.

WHY?

***OPS2*'s resident News Editor, Jamie Sefton succinctly explains exactly why *Star Wars: Starfighter* is worthy of a Game Over slot.**

"I've always loved *X-Wing*, *Rogue Squadron* and first-person shooter *Dark Forces: Jedi Knight*. *Star Wars: Starfighter* is a fantastic return to form for LucasArts, delivering a beautiful-looking space combat game, with a solid non-*Phantom Menace* storyline and more depth than the usual console title. It hasn't the complexity of *TIE Fighter* – but as a pick-up-and-play blaster stuffed with dangerous new foes, heart-stopping sound effects and a wonderful score from John Williams, it's nigh-on perfect."

WHO?

Artist and proud Brummie Lucy McLauchlan, hasn't got a PS2 just yet, but she's looking forward to playing *SWS* when she does.

"In the illustration, I really wanted to emphasise my style and the strength of Nym, the pirate on the right. I love *Star Wars*, but I wouldn't say I'm one of those obsessive fans who constantly recites lines in the pub. As far as videogames go, I haven't played a lot recently – not since *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* days. *(Ye olde ZX Spectrume sportse titlee – Ancient Ed)* I have been playing Noodle's fighting game on the Gorillaz site a bit, though." Head to **www.gorillaz.com/noodlefight** for details.

YOUR GO!

If you think you've reached a better end sequence, write to us and tell us what it is, how you got there and why you think it's so great. Prizes on offer for the ones that we feature on this page include a framed print of the final artwork. Write to us at: **GameOver, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.** Email **PS2@futurenet.co.uk.**

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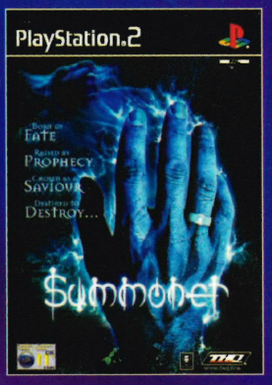
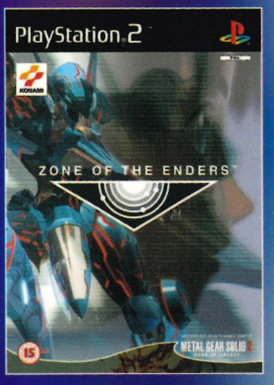
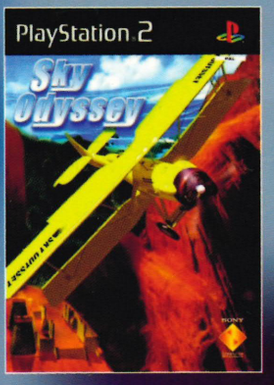
UNREAL TOURNAMENT



SUMMONER



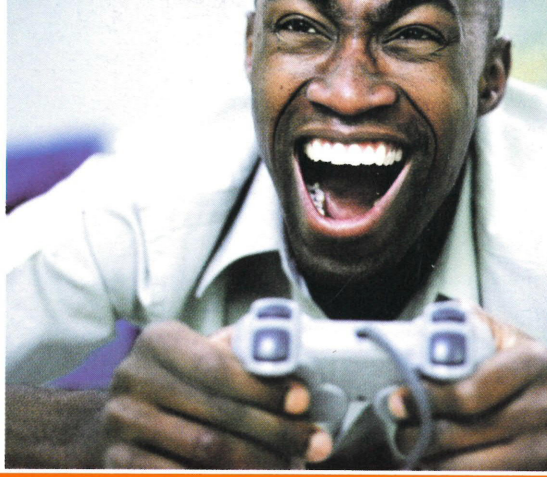
ZONE OF THE ENDERS



SKY ODYSSEY

WHATEVER TURNS YOU ON

Virgin megastores



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playstation 5140	Robbie Williams Rock DJ 1010	Calif Tation 5227	Red Hot Chilli Peppers Californication 1019
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Britney Spears Oops I Did it Again	1033	Film James Bond	1006	Offspring Original Prankster	1041	TV Hawaii 5.0	1020
Britney Spears Baby One More Time	1049	Film Mission Impossible	1002	Pink Floyd Another Brick in the Wall	1082	TV Knight Rider	1007
Celine Dion My Heart Will Go On	1099	Film Beverly Hills Cop (Axel F)	1008	Queen Bohemian Rhapsody	1044	TV Simpsons	1028
Christina Aguilera Genie in a Bottle	1079	Gabrielle When a Woman	1097	Rednex Cotton Eye Joe	1069	TV Southpark	1035
Coldplay Trouble	1040	All Saints Black Coffee	1013	Roberta Flack Killing Me Softly	1053	TV Friends	1043
Craig David 7 Days	1027	Kylie Minogue Please Stay	1045	Rolling Stones Satisfaction	1065	Village People YMCA	1038
Dane Shut Up and Forget About it	1113	Lou Bega Mambo no.5	1047	S Club 7 S Club Party	1093		
Destiny's Child Jumpin' Jumpin'	1017	Madonna Don't Tell Me	1014	Santana Maria	1022		

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